THE (RE)MYSTIFICATION OF LONDON: REVELATIONS OF CONTESTED

SPACE, CONCEALED IDENTITY, AND MOVING MENACE IN LATE-

VICTORIAN GOTHIC FICTION

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AARON JAMES HOUSHOLDER

DISSERTATION ADVISOR: DR. JOYCE HUFF

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

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DEDICATION

After school one day, my son (who was then in kindergarten) found me seated at my computer, as usual, working on this project. He said, "Wow, Daddy. I'm really glad we have a computer class at my school."

"Why is that?" I asked.

"Because when I do MY dissertation," he said, "I'll probably have to spend a LOT of time at my computer just like you do."

In writing this project I have run the risk of making this image – me hunched over my computer keyboard – an enduring facet of my son's childhood. At the conclusion of this process, my boy, I will endeavor to replace that image with other, more active and interactive memories.

In the meantime, I would like to dedicate this work to my son Scottie, a second-grader now. I also dedicate it to my two other children, both born during the writing of this dissertation: my son Benjie, who passed away in 2010; and my daughter Alivia, who is now thirteen months old. And I dedicate this project to my wife Suahil, who has endured my occasional absence, frequently-divided attention, and recurring bouts of self-doubt with incomparable grace and support; I am humbled daily by her love. Without all of you there would have been no strength to do this work, and more importantly, no reason to do it. Whatever love I've invested in this project belongs wholly to you.

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT:
The (Re)Mystification of London: Revelations of Contested Space, Concealed Identity, and Moving Menace in Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction

STUDENT: Aaron J. Housholder

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This project asserts that much of the cultural anxiety found in Gothic-infused late-Victorian fiction derives from literary revelations of the nested spaces, shifting identities, and spontaneous connections inherent to the late-Victorian metropolis. The three literary texts studied here – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Arthur Conan Doyle, *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* by E.W. Hornung, and *The Thirty-Nine Steps* by John Buchan – all depict London as fundamentally suitable for those who seek to evade the disciplinary gaze and to pursue menacing schemes of criminality and invasion. Doyle's text illustrates the interconnectedness of the spaces within London as well as the passable threshold between London and the English countryside; both the villain Stapleton and the hero Sherlock Holmes use these connections to attack and defend, respectively, the city and its inhabitants. Hornung's stories depict the machinations employed by the gentleman-thief Raffles as he alters his identity and his codes of behaviour in order to

free himself to pursue criminal ends and thus as he challenges cultural barriers. Buchan's text, building on the others, explores the dissolution of cultural boundaries and identities incumbent upon the spontaneous connections made between those who attack English culture and those, like Richard Hannay, who defend it. There emerges in these texts a vision of London (and by extension Great Britain) as a swirling vortex of motion, an unknowable labyrinth perpetually threatened by menacing agents from without and within. I have employed Victor Turner's theories of liminality and communitas to describe how criminal agents, and their equally menacing "good-guy" pursuers, separate themselves from structured society in order to move freely and to gain access to the contested thresholds they seek to infiltrate. I also invoke theories of the Gothic, surveillance, and travel, as well as Jeffrey Cohen's monster theory, to characterize the anxiety embedded in such invasions.

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And, once again, to my wife Suahil and my children Scottie and Livie, I say thank you for your infinite patience, unfailing support, and steadfast belief that I could do this work. This, such as it is, is for you.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Contextual Background: Menace in Motion

On the day he makes his treacherous escape from Dracula's castle, Jonathan

Harker writes one final entry in his journal, an entry structured around the climactic

emotional moment in which he looks down upon the blood-gorged body of the Count in

his coffin:

> There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me
>
> mad. This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where,
>
> perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions,
>
> satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of
>
> semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad.
>
> A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster. (51)

For Jonathan, in that moment, the greatest horror attached to Dracula has little to do with

his seemingly supernatural powers of consumption and renewal, though he looks

simultaneously "bloated" (consumption) and yet younger (renewal) than Jonathan has

seen him before. It has little to do with the malice he sees in the Count's face, though

that malice certainly chills Jonathan's soul. It has little if anything to do with the satanic

nature of Dracula's nocturnal endeavors. These factors, while morally repulsive and

physically repugnant to the Englishman, under other circumstances might merely lead

him to classify the Count as a foreign oddity, an example of the dark exotic powers

rumored to reside in the unmapped reaches of Eastern Europe. What truly terrifies

Jonathan Harker is the notion that Dracula might travel, that he might transport his

powers from this dark place, where (in Harker's view) such evil might belong, to

London, where such evil ideally has no place. It is not the evil alone that terrifies, but

also the mobility that allows that evil to spread. Without mobility, Dracula, for all of the

menacing evil at his command, would be contained and therefore essentially impotent.

As the Count fashions his travel plans, however, Dracula becomes for Harker the most

terrifying threat imaginable: a viral force of moving, menacing evil, a force the socio-

cultural structures of London, Harker fears, are not prepared to counter.

Certainly Bram Stoker was not the only writer of the late-Victorian period to

explore the fear attached the mobile menace or indeed to explore the terror inherent to the

presence of an undetected enemy in the heart of the nation's capital. The ambiguity and

thus the anxiety surrounding those who move outside of or through cultural boundaries,

those who move either to attack culture or to defend it, becomes a persistent theme in the

Gothic-infused texts of this period, especially those texts set at least partially in the city

of London. In this study, I will examine this thematic and theoretical phenomenon,

particularly as the authors of this period investigate the degree to which the city can be

conceived as a daunting, Gothic, labyrinthine space because of boundary-breaking

characters like Dracula, those who embody uncontrolled, menacing mobility.

Such a viral moving menace is exactly the type of force that initially inspired the

design of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Designed in 1785, Bentham's prison embodied

what Foucault later described as a "political dream": the "utopia of the perfectly

governed city" (198) in which the confined constituents of the "city" are subjected,

without the use of force, to the constant exercise of disciplinary power because of the

perceived omnipresence of undetectable observation. Foucault suggests that this model

of discipline – simultaneous confinement and observation – finds its origin in the

strategies of containment practiced in plague-stricken towns in the Middle Ages. The

plague, he argues, is fundamentally "a form, at once real and imaginary, of disorder"

(198). This disorder, he says, comes from the perceived dangers of "mixture": the

intermingling of healthy and sick bodies, of living and dead bodies, of the tainted and the

clean (197). To fight the disorderly mixtures of a mobile plague, the first step was to

create "a segmented, immobile, frozen space" in which "[e]ach individual is fixed in his

place" with the knowledge that "if he moves, he does so at the risk of his life, contagion,

or punishment" (195). "Against the plague, which is a mixture," Foucault concludes,

"discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis" (197). And it was this

disciplinary analytical power, this "political dream," to which Bentham gave architectural

form in his Panopticon.

Here, however, we must draw a distinction, as Foucault does, between the actions

taken in the plague-stricken town and Bentham's more refined panoptic establishment

derived from those actions. Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault argues as he extends

Bentham's architectural model into his own epistemological metaphor, "must be

understood as a generalized model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in

terms of the everyday life of men" (205). Because of its "ideal form," and therefore its

applicability to so many iterations of exercised power, the Panopticon must not be

thought of as a reactionary mechanism designed to combat or react to a single type of

social or political threat. As it might effectively be used in prisons, schools, factories, and hospitals, to list a few of Foucault's examples, the Panopticon is a system of generalized power maintenance, and an idealized one at that, rather than a means of direct response to an acute cultural threat. If anything, the Panopticon is a system designed to eliminate the possibility that such a threat might ever develop by effectively limiting the mobility and thus the potential of mixture among those under constant observation. That is, those under observation must be to some degree confined, or at least limited by thresholds they are not permitted to cross, or the observation doesn't work. Mobile subjects are much more difficult to see.

In the plague-stricken town, however, we see the panopticist mechanisms of containment and separation exercised more pointedly, more urgently, and indeed more forcefully as a means to combat a single, immediate threat, what Foucault calls "an exceptional situation" (205). To fight this "extraordinary evil," which in the case of the plague is a mobile menace, political power is not generally and invisibly maintained, as it is in the Panopticon; rather, "power is mobilized; it makes itself everywhere present *and visible*" (205; my emphasis). The immediate social threat of contagion is met with an outward display of corrective and restrictive power, a power that "invents new mechanisms" of control as needed and seeks to isolate and immobilize any who might spread the contagion, any who might add to the "mixture" that forms the plague-ridden antithesis of all the social "purity" of disciplined order. In its most aggressive form, the political power in command of a plague-stricken town "constructs for a time what is both a counter-city and the perfect society; it imposes an ideal functioning, but one that is

reduced, in the final analysis, like the evil it combats, to a simple dualism of life and death: that which moves brings death, and one kills that which moves" (205).

Two crucial points arise from Foucault's summation as related to this project. First, his depiction of the dualism at the heart of a culture's means of self-defense resonates with the melodrama so often attributed to the emotional excesses of the Gothic. As Fred Botting notes, Gothic fiction's emotional and thematic excesses, which illustrate a society's "fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries," are designed to produce in readers "ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power" (2). To be pushed to the extreme of killing anything that moves, as Foucault puts it, is to be pushed beyond, or indeed to transgress, the bounds generally established by the conventions of civilized cultural behavior. Such transgression seems likely to produce an ambivalent reaction at best within a civilized culture, in part because the pre-emptive killing of a potential enemy might be seen as a co-mingling of civilized and uncivilized (or good and evil, or moral and immoral, or appropriate and inappropriate) methods, a participation in the act of blurring of the lines between, one might say, the evil threatening the culture and the moral integrity of the culture itself. It is within those blurred lines, as we shall see in this project, that the writers of late-Victorian Gothic fiction positioned so much of the narrative tension and cultural commentary present in their literary works. The writers I study here deployed the Gothic, as I will show, to depict the "exceptional situation" of the plague town and, what is more frightening, to show that this plague spreads unseen betwixt and between the spaces governed by official modes of discipline. The characters in my study find their

greatest freedom and greatest menace in the ability to defy visual systems of surveillance and to move.

A second point to consider: the primary defense offered by the administrators of a culture under attack has been, as Foucault suggests, to make the means of cultural defense – in essence, the police – more visible, a move that ironically provides clever villains with a certain level of power. Whereas those under the unseen surveillance of the Panopticon cannot tell when they are under observation, those under the supposed control of a visible police force have the opportunity, one might say, to observe their observers. The principle behind panoptical observation is that those under observation can always see the point from which they might, at any moment, be observed, but can never see the observers themselves. The central point of observation is, says Foucault, "a perfect eye that nothing would escape *and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned*" (173; my emphasis). This idealized disciplinary system only works if those under police power can see the station of power itself. And this works well, in theory, as long as those under observation, those who might pose a threat to disciplinary power, cannot move outside of the area covered by the disciplinary gaze. They are, when so restrained, disciplined by the possibility of observation at any given moment; the eye is always watching them, or so it seems. If they somehow find a way to break containment and to move freely, however, they suddenly enjoy an incredible advantage: by virtue of their constant view of the point of observation, and thus their ability to note (and thus avoid) where their observers operate, the villains have the opportunity to out-maneuver them, to evade systematically the policing strategies of those in authority. When afforded a glimpse of the fabric of social discipline, in other words, strategic mobile villains have the

opportunity to find the seams within that fabric and then to occupy or move through those seams. They seek, or create, the space – what Victor Turner would call a liminal space – in which to render themselves invisible.

Turner's notions of liminal space as well as the "liminoid" provide us with a way to articulate and understand how these villains, and ultimately their pursuers, might operate. I will explore Turner's theories in more detail later in this chapter, but suffice it to say here that, for Turner, the liminal space is the hidden realm that can be found or constructed within or between the observable structures of daily cultural practice. In Turner's conception, drawn from his observations of African tribal ritual, the liminal is by nature a transformative space, one in which those who spend time there might develop (physically, spiritually, mentally) in ways not available to them within the confines of structured daily life. He designates as "liminal" those who are required by cultural mores to occupy that space; he designates as "liminoid" those, generally in more industrial cultures, who *choose* to occupy such spaces for the purposes of entertainment or self-imposed, self-selected development. It should be noted here that, perhaps because of his anthropological interests in personal growth and cultural development, Turner saw liminal space and liminal/liminoid activity as inherently enriching components of cultural and personal development. Though he freely acknowledges the "invisibility" of the liminal space and of those who temporarily occupy it, he asserts that this invisibility makes the intended development possible; without cultural constraint, those in the liminal space are free to grow. And yet, as I argue throughout this project, the late-Victorian writers of Gothic fiction saw a different, much more frightening potential in that

invisibility[1]. The Gothic of this period shows what happens when the panoptic powers of official discipline break down; it is by motion through the carefully-constructed spaces invisible to those powers that the villains (and their pursuers) seek to evade observation. They are free to "grow" in this space, certainly, as Turner suggests; they are also free to move and thus to pursue their menacing ends.

Given Foucault's analysis of observational disciplinary strategies, and given the inherent invisibility and thus the potential menace of those who choose to move through the hidden liminal spaces inherent to late-Victorian society, one might conclude that Bentham's Panopticon (and later the strategies of the visible forces of the London Metropolitan Police) was designed to combat the very same cultural anxieties the late-Victorian authors exploit for Gothic effect in their fiction. While the legal mechanisms of an orderly or disciplinary society seek to restrain, confine, observe, and potentially annihilate those engaged in unauthorized movement, popular late-Victorian writers such as Sir Arthur Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, E. W. Hornung, Bram Stoker, and John Buchan people their fiction with characters who, for good or ill, refuse to occupy, or decide temporarily to leave, the structured and culturally approved static positions available to them. Some, including A.J. Raffles, Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde, Dorian

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[1] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White provide a specific example of the fear inherent to cultural invisibility. After describing (as I have above) Foucault's notion of Bentham's Panopticon, Stallybrass and White report, "Throughout the nineteenth century, the 'invisibility' of the poor was a source of fear. In Britain, the Select Committee of 1838 noted that there were whole areas of London through which 'no great thoroughfare passed' and, as a consequence, 'a dense population of the lowest classes of persons' were 'entirely secluded from the observation and influence of better educated neighbours'. […] The 'labouring' and 'dangerous' classes would be transformed, it was implied, once they became visible. On the one hand, there would be surveillance by *policing*; on the other, the inculcation of *politeness* though the benign gaze of the bourgeoisie" (134-35; original emphasis).

Gray, and Dracula free themselves from cultural constraint in order to subvert the orderly

operations of their culture in pursuit of their own illicit ends. These are the traveling

villains. Others – Sherlock Holmes, Richard Hannay, and Professor Van Helsing among

them – free themselves for, one might say, more culturally conservative or sanctioned

reasons; far from threatening the culture from which they have detached themselves,

these traveling heroes endeavor within a carefully constructed liminal space to perform a

culturally preservative task they cannot complete from within the culture they serve.

These characters, interestingly enough, seem to serve as the literary embodiment of

Foucault's notion that a disciplinary society will deploy mechanisms to kill, or at least

attempt to stop, anything that moves, lending to their characters and their methods a

healthy dose of Gothic ambivalence. They therefore participate in the blurring of cultural

and behavioral lines; they seem to contradict the mandates of an orderly and disciplined

society in order to preserve and defend that very society. As Fred Botting argues:

> These contradictions undermine the project of attaining and fixing secure
>
> boundaries and leave Gothic texts open to a play of ambivalence, a
>
> dynamic of limit and transgression that both restores and contests
>
> boundaries. This play of terms, of oppositions, indeed, characterizes the
>
> ambivalence of Gothic fiction: good depends on evil, light on dark, reason
>
> on irrationality, in order to define limits. The play means that Gothic is an
>
> inscription neither of darkness nor of light, a delineation neither of reason
>
> and morality nor of superstition and corruption, neither good nor evil, but
>
> both at the same time. (9)

The traveling villains and traveling heroes in these texts thus should be considered as bound by their shared cultural ambiguity, their temporary outsidership in the culture they choose either to attack or defend. Regardless of their motivations, what ties all of these characters together is that they move, and that they do so intentionally in a manner unobserved by the analytical and controlling gaze of the legal mechanisms that police and attempt to preserve the metropolis through which they move. They all are liminoid movers who operate in liminal space.

Statement of Purpose: Exploring Liminoid Movement through Liminal Space

In his introduction to *Gothic and Modernism: Essaying Dark Literary Modernity*, John Paul Riquelme identifies the following gap in literary scholarship: "Critics have yet to explore extensively the ways in which elements of the Gothic tradition have become disseminated in the writings of the long twentieth century, from 1880 to the present" (5). Riquelme's declaration may be a bit of an overstatement; there are at least a few critics who have accepted the challenge to explore the infusion of the Gothic tradition into modernist writings. In an essay entitled "Gothic and the Twentieth Century," to cite one example, Catherine Spooner points to the "oppressive city streets and spoiled priests" in *Dubliners*, the "claustrophobic jungle and cannibal threats" in *Heart of Darkness*, the "cast of tarot readers, femmes fatales and the walking dead" in *The Waste Land* and argues that in modernist writing, Gothic becomes "one tool among many employed in the service of conjuring up interior terrors" (40). Similarly, Fred Botting devotes an entire chapter of *Gothic* to a discussion of the various forms and conventions of twentieth-century Gothic writing and film. Clearly some attempts have been made recently to

explore the interplay between Gothic traditions and the literary productions of modernity, though perhaps such attempts have not been as "extensive" as Riquelme thinks are warranted. In particular, as I have discovered, no one has yet examined the Gothic fiction of this period as a nexus of Turner's anthropological conceptions of liminality, the cultural ambiguity inherent to those in motion, and the epistemological transformation that necessarily takes place within the urban spaces that provide the backdrop for such motion. It is within this theoretical gap still remaining in this area of scholarship that I position this dissertation.

My purpose here, therefore, is to explore extensively one element of the Gothic tradition – namely, the construction of liminal space, and the portrayal of liminoid movement through that liminal space – that both infuses late-Victorian Gothic fiction and reaches forward into the early stages of literary modernism, into that nebulous literary period before and during World War I in which the long twentieth century mentioned by Riquelme overlaps and perhaps supplants the extended nineteenth century driven by the vestiges of Victorian aesthetic sensibilities. I intend for this examination of liminoid movement through liminal space to speak to some of the issues within Riquelme's broad parameters, particularly as I argue that these late-Victorian authors deploy Gothic conventions in a multi-layered urban setting through varied forms of contemporary Victorian popular fiction, and in doing so challenge several cultural dichotomies thought to be integral to conceptions of British identity. These texts work together with other contemporary works to posit in this cultural moment the transgressive and liminal uncertainty inherent to the modern metropolis, and indeed to the rise of modernity itself.

I've chosen to examine three popular late-Victorian works that stand out to me as relevant for this study: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, E. W. Hornung's *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*, and John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.[2] Using each of these texts as a case study, my central analytical concern will be to reconceptualize Victor Turner's notion of liminality at three of the points in which liminality intersects with literary notions of the Gothic in these texts. These three points include the mystery attached to the spaces in which liminal transformations take place (as illustrated in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*), the ambiguity of characters as they move through those liminal spaces (*Raffles*), and the unlikely or seemingly subversive connections (Turner's word here is *communitas*) that are formed between people who share those spaces (*The Thirty-Nine Steps*). Through the examination of these texts, I seek to gain a deeper understanding of the manner in which these late-Victorian texts explore the intersecting liminalities inherent to contemporary London and serve to subvert, in a sense, what might be thought of as a cultural desire (as expressed by Bentham a century before) to observe and categorize all threats to the British way of life. I also will explore the manner in which these authors constructed differing, intersecting versions of the liminal spaces through which their characters move. And I intend further to show the manner in which these intersecting liminalities emphasized the unknowability of the modern metropolis, thus creating a physical locus for, or perhaps an

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[2] I have opted throughout this project to label these texts as "late-Victorian" even though *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) and *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1914) were published after the end of Victoria's reign and might rightly be called either Edwardian or *fin-de-siècle* texts. Please see "A Note on Terminology" (page 23, below) for an explanation of the terms I've chosen to employ.

urban embodiment of, the epistemological uncertainty that in the coming years would undergird the rise of modernist thought.

Critical Apparatus: Theorizing the Liminoid

It has become commonplace in literary scholarship to describe those positioned at the cultural margins as occupying a "liminal" space. And indeed the very nature of the word suggests that those so labeled might stand at the cultural threshold, peering in perhaps at a realm into which they have not been accepted. As conceived by Victor Turner, however, liminality has less to do with a state of marginalization and more to do with a temporary process of growth or transformation that can only occur outside of or between the everyday operations of a given culture. The concept, again in Turner's view, also concerns the cultural construction of that metaphoric space in which the transformative process can take place. The liminal space, he argues, is that carefully delineated abstract "space" outside the bounds of structured society, and indeed outside the view or defined recognition of that society, in which processes necessary for the furtherance of that society can take place.

It is within this conception of space that I've located the tension inherent to the Gothic works I will discuss in this project. The liminal space for Turner is a metaphorical space of transformation, as I've just mentioned, but it is also a physical space because of the corporeal nature of the initiates undergoing the rituals of liminality. Turner writes that such initiates, or "neophytes" as he calls them, "are sometimes said to 'be in another place.' They have physical but not social 'reality,' hence they have to be hidden, since it is a paradox, a scandal, to see what ought not to be there!" (*The Forest of*

Symbols 98). This scandalous paradox arises when someone might be said to occupy two

metaphorical spaces, one within the confines of a disciplined society and one under the

disciplinary system of a liminal space, at the same time. Or, to put it more precisely, it

would be scandalous for one physical space to serve two metaphorical functions for the

single body occupying that space. In the texts I've studied here, London frequently

serves as such an ambiguous place. The city is filled with non-liminal people going

about their daily lives as well as liminal figures who *appear to be* going about their daily

lives but who are in fact engaged on missions of secret menace. Liminal transformation

is largely an internal process; it is impossible to tell from outward appearances when

someone is in the midst of such an evolution in personality or social standing. For

Turner, as long as the liminal space is physically separated from the confines of a tribe

and those occupying the liminal space are out of sight, all is well. If someone undergoing

a liminal transformation were to occupy space within the confines of a disciplined

society, a scandal would be inevitable because it would be impossible to tell, from the

outside, which disciplinary model held sway over the initiate. The neophyte (answerable

only to the dictates of the ritual) who occupies space within the confines of a non-liminal

society embodies a Gothic sense of ambiguity because he or she might be secretly up to

something fundamentally destructive to that society, as we see time and again in the

works of Doyle, Hornung, and Buchan.

Though the concept of liminality has, as I said, become a common term in literary

scholarship, a related and for this project an equally illuminating concept has been largely

overlooked in recent scholarly endeavors. Turner describes the "liminoid" as one who

enters the liminal space intentionally, or rather by choice as opposed to cultural mandate.

While in Turner's anthropological studies the liminal space was an inherent part of culture, a place to which all members (at least all members deemed capable of growth) must go at some point in their lives in order to progress in their social standing, the term "liminoid" might be applied to anyone who, without the sense of culturally inherent requirement, chooses of his or her own volition temporarily to leave the bounds of cultural standing and enter the liminal space to satisfy some private desire for transformation. Throughout *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, Turner uses the process of pilgrimage as an example of liminoid activity; those who embark on pilgrimages to Christian holy sites are not necessarily required to do so, but rather choose to do so in order to achieve some sort of personal spiritual transformation. Other examples of liminoid activities include the acts of attending college, attending a sporting event, or perhaps hiking through the woods; each of these activities might provide the participant with a transformative experience, each takes place in a designated "space" contained within (and thus, to some extent, separated from) a larger cultural context, and each is essentially a voluntary endeavor. Turner suggests that in the postindustrial world, one rarely encounters actual instances of liminality, as most of the transformative rituals in modern industrial society are deemed voluntary. What we see most frequently, Turner says, is the liminoid[3].

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[3] Scholars have recently sought to reshape Turner's distinction between liminal and liminoid. Turner suggests that the liminal process he witnessed in the tribal cultures of Africa – a culturally mandated process of transformation conducted in a space outside the bounds of everyday social structures – has disappeared in the western postindustrial world and has been replaced by the liminoid, a voluntary and temporary separation of oneself from the everyday processes and restrictions of everyday life. He notes further that such separations are often done in leisure – that is, they are done voluntarily, without

As I consider the manner in which Turner's concept of liminality intersects with literary notions of the Gothic and the cultural dynamics of mobility, it becomes evident that the primary distinction between liminal and liminoid rests in the difference between passivity and agency. That is, a person who undergoes a culturally mandated process of liminal transformation does so passively; though the actions required to complete the process might require a certain level of individual initiative and diligence, a liminal subject enters the liminal process because he or she has to. The process is something that he or she must, if you will, undergo or endure. The liminoid, on the other hand, embarks upon a transformative journey by choice, and he or she does so with the intention of making something happen, of effecting some type of change in personal (cultural, financial, spiritual) status. Such a journey necessarily involves an initial and then sustained strategy for evading observation because, by definition, the liminoid mover must remain outside the bounds (and thus the vision) of the culture through which he or she moves. It seems, therefore, that the characters in late-Victorian Gothic fiction who choose to enter, move through, or exploit the transformative liminal spaces inherent to

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the pressures of cultural mandate. Scholars such as Graham St. John (2008) have taken this last definition and concluded that liminoid activity must therefore necessarily be playful, that only such pastimes as sports, dramatic performance, and other forms of recreation can qualify as liminoid activities. Turner's definition of liminoid, however, does not indicate that the activity must be playful. He specifically mentions a pilgrimage as a liminoid activity; the pilgrimage, as one might easily see, is a voluntary and temporary removal of oneself from one's normal mode of everyday life but would hardly be described as a form of play. I contend, therefore, that the distinction Turner makes between liminal and liminoid is not a distinction between work and play, but rather between culturally mandated separation and voluntary self-removal, between passive obedience to cultural norms and active participation in the opportunity to step outside cultural bounds.

the city around them may and should be called liminoid characters because of the individual agency through which they divorce themselves from social observation.

I would like to argue, however, that the liminoid has not actually replaced the liminal, as Turner suggests, but rather has served to complicate and illuminate the cultural and individual dynamics of liminality. While culturally mandated liminal experiences might be rare in a postindustrial culture, liminal *spaces*, those set-apart places essentially hidden within a given society, are prevalent and indeed inherent to any progressive industrial society. One might choose (as a liminoid) to attend a sporting event, go on a hike, or travel by subway or train throughout or away from a city, but in each case a real space is required in order for liminoid transformation to occur. It is worth noting here that all of the real spaces required for liminoid transformation also require those who enter to equip or otherwise qualify themselves for admission: a potential hiker should ideally be physically conditioned and properly dressed or equipped; one who hopes to ride a train or attend a sporting event must hold the proper ticket. We should note, too, that one must maintain a certain level of performance or culturally-approved behavior in each of these spaces to maintain one's presence; unruly conduct or the destruction of property can lead to one's ejection from these liminal spaces. One of the ongoing discussions in this project will involve the manner in which the liminoid movers in question are required to qualify themselves (through shifting disguises, for example) for their entry into and continued presence in the liminal spaces through which they move.

In late-Victorian Gothic fiction, these concrete liminal spaces – the dark alleys, train and subway stations, hidden rooms, and the crowded streets that lend so much

Gothic atmosphere to these stories – seem inherent (and perhaps fundamental) to post-industrial London in the nineteenth century. Similarly, the methods by which liminoid movers equip themselves to occupy these spaces – through gentlemanly disguise, through the negotiation of modern transportation systems, through an understanding of modern methods of law enforcement – seem distinctly suited to the turn-of-the-century metropolis. As Robert Mighall argues, the Gothic mode of fiction in the Victorian period represents "not just a Gothic in the city, [but rather] a Gothic *of* the city. Its terrors derive from situations peculiar to, and firmly located within, the urban experience" (30; original emphasis). Thus the liminoid does not replace the liminal, but rather illuminates it: by choosing to enter London's Gothic liminal spaces, and by equipping themselves for these spaces specifically, the liminoid literary characters under discussion here expose these otherwise hidden places and methods to our view.

Though he usually explores liminality as an abstract facet of personal rites of passage, at times Turner does acknowledge both the spatial component and the chaotic potential inherent to the liminal process. In *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, Turner offers an illuminating parenthetic aside that hints at a more concrete physical understanding of liminality and the space it requires. According to Arnold van Gennep's formulation, Turner explains, *rites de passage*:

> […] are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or *limen* – the Latin for threshold, signifying the great importance of real or symbolic thresholds at this middle period of the rites, though *cunicular*, "being in a tunnel," would better describe the quality of this phase in many cases, its

hidden nature, its sometimes mysterious darkness), and reaggregation.

(232)

Turner retains the term "liminal" in his further discussion of this subject, but his use of "cunicular" here indicates that he understands both the concrete space inherent to the process of transformation as well as the "mysterious darkness" often attached to such spaces. Turner goes further in *The Anthropology of Experience*, describing the liminal as "a fructile chaos, a storehouse of possibilities, not a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structures, a gestation process, a fetation of modes appropriate to postliminal existence" (42). Even this description of the liminal resonates with Turner's fundamental optimism; to call the chaos "fructile" is to suggest that the chaos itself is capable of bearing fruit, or rather is fertile for the formation of that which is edifying, nourishing, enriching. He does not seem to consider that such chaos might also be entropic – that someone might create for himself just such a liminal space in order to generate the chaos needed not to produce the fruit that might enrich social structures, but instead to produce an uncontrolled (viral) menace that might blow those structures apart. Were he so inclined, Turner could have easily concluded that such liminal spaces, such hidden places within a given culture, necessarily resonate with a Gothic ambiance of potential menace, an ambiance of which the authors of late-Victorian Gothic fiction certainly took advantage.

In addition to exploring the fundamental mystery attached to liminal space, I will argue further that what drives the pervasive Gothic impact generated by these liminoid characters is not just their occupation of the liminal spaces inherent to the scientifically, socially, and politically advanced and advancing culture of 19th-century England

(particularly London), but also the freedom these characters enjoy as they move through those spaces. Travel theorist and historian Eric J. Leed draws an important cultural distinction in *The Mind of the Traveler* between those in motion and those who remain contained by social structures:

> Civilized travel, at least travel within accomplished historical civilities,
> assumes the condition of sessility, settlement, and sedentarism – the
> territorialization of the human group and the localization of "place." The
> meanings traditionally invested in the journey, through a significant
> portion of human history, derive from the experienced contrasts mobility
> offers to a condition of sessility, which is presumed normal. It is only
> within the context of settlement that travel becomes a "liminal"
> experience, a moment betwixt and between established social orders and
> identities. (17-18)

As Leed suggests, travel, or more generally mobility, is by definition a liminal endeavor within the context of a society built on the norm of sessility or settlement. Sessility and mobility here are to some extent metaphorical; even people whose lives are structured around a given place still move within that place (they go from home to work to the pub and back home, for example). The sense of mobility here is the sense of an exceptional trip, a time and space of temporary and unusual travel. This might include a most innocuous vacation or the most heinous commission of a crime, both of which would qualify as non-routine movement. Those who are engaged in such movement, in other words, do so as liminal exceptions to the norm of settlement created by those who remain

sessile; this liminality renders those in motion problematic within a disciplined, observational society. As Turner argues in *The Ritual Process*:

> The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ('threshold people') are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony. (95)

Travelers in motion are therefore, theoretically at least[4], impossible to classify in the spaces through which they move; they resist conventional modes of cultural classification – place of origin, home address, profession – because in the act of travel they have left these elements of themselves behind. They move freely among, or perhaps betwixt and between, those who are constrained by the routines and rigors of everyday sessile life. They exist in the empty space between the cultural institutions that govern those routines and rigors. A traveler in motion is indefinable, unknowable, inherently unpredictable, fundamentally ungovernable, and as such might be considered the scariest

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[4] I say "theoretically" here advisedly. We have seen, especially in the last decade, ever more aggressive attempts by disciplinary societies to combat, or rather to peer into, the unclassifiable nature of those in motion. Anyone who has recently undergone security protocols at an American airport can attest to the efforts made by our disciplinary society to know as much as possible about mobile individuals. I would describe these measures, though, not as a threat to the inherent cultural ambiguity of those in motion, but rather as an acknowledgment of that ambiguity. I would add, too, that once an individual gets off the plane at his/her destination and mixes into society there, the cultural ambiguity returns in full force. Even the labels we attach to travelers – "business traveler" or "tourist," for example – fail to pin down the identities and intentions of those travelers in any meaningful way.

entity possible in a panopticonical system: one who can always be seen and yet never understood, one who might with impunity "mix" into the otherwise orderly elements of a disciplined society. Turner emphasizes the "polluting" ambiguity of such characters as he discusses the findings of Mary Douglas, who argued (in 1966) that "the concept of pollution 'is a reaction to protect cherished principles and categories from contradiction.'" Turner concludes, essentially, that "The unclear is the unclean," and adds:

> From this standpoint, one would expect to find that transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural topography), and are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all recognized fixed points in space-time of cultural classification. (*The Forest of Symbols*, 97)

Liminal characters, by their very nature, and regardless of their personal intent, therefore represent a social danger, a threat to disciplined society, because of their cultural unknowability. They cannot necessarily be observed and controlled by the disciplinary state because, by definition, they resist singular classification; they are neither one thing nor another. And as such, the potential exists for them to operate according to their own rules rather than obeying the categorical rules of the state.

We might conclude, then, that the opposite of the analytical cultural discipline is "mixture," metaphorically identified by Foucault with the plague; he uses the metaphor of the epidemic to demonstrate the aggressively analytical and regimented social measures taken to prevent the spread of that epidemic. The observational discipline of

cultural classification, one might infer, has as its constant enemy the concept of mixture. And yet, as Turner argues, a fundamental facet of liminal phenomena is the development of *communitas*, a bond formed not according to neatly delineated distinctions of social class or status, but rather simply as a result of shared liminal experience. It is a bond of mixture, a messy conglomeration of connections seemingly antithetical to the ideally structured society. Turner contends in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* that "[t]he bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational" and "not shaped by norms" (274). Within the liminal space, then, people from all cultural classifications – those, one might argue, who have been separated and contained for observational purposes – might comingle and thus defeat the very purpose of the classifications they defy.

Of course liminoid movement through liminal space does not automatically or even necessarily remove one from his/her outwardly-apparent cultural class. Indeed, the very trappings of these social classes might prevent a potential liminoid from disappearing, as it were, into the liminal space and joining the "mixed" company he/she might find there. To move through the seams of society and travel unnoticed, it is necessary for some liminoid heroes and villains alike to alter their appearances; one might say that liminoid movement requires disguise, or that the creation of a mobile liminal space, or perhaps the removal into liminality, is at least partly achieved by a masking of appearance. We need not look far into the novels in question here to find characters with the capacity to move throughout society whose identities are often "mixed" by the element of disguise. Holmes frequently appears as someone else; Raffles prides himself on his ability to mask his identity; Dracula often changes his appearance;

Jekyll becomes Hyde; Dorian Gray dresses himself according to the social sphere through which he moved at any given time (and, indeed, uses his physical body as a disguise to hide the moral corruption evident in his picture); Richard Hannay's enemies disguise themselves as British subjects; Hannay himself employs a host of disguises to hide in Scotland and move through London. Indeed, these late-Victorian texts revolve around the depiction of potentially menacing characters who employed mixed identities to form otherwise unlikely bonds with each other, and who used those disguises to move through London often several steps ahead of those culturally authorized to police the city.

We should note, though, that ultimately the success of the liminoid hero in confronting and defeating the liminoid villain is born out their shared status, their communitas, their direct contact in the liminal space. This contact inevitably, as I will show, taints the hero; those heroes who move through the liminal space with the same alacrity as the villains therein necessarily adopt some of the same methods used by the villains to avoid official detection. Sherlock Holmes only defeats Stapleton when he dons a disguise, deceives those around him, and agrees to step into the liminal space of contest. Similarly, Van Helsing, Harker and their colleagues only defeat Dracula by leaving their customary social spheres, and the social structures therein, to engage in the same type of liminoid travel that initially brought Dracula to London. And Richard Hannay, alone among the best and brightest of British military minds, is qualified to defeat the German spies because of his direct liminal contact with them, his participation in the same methods of stealth and evasion they used to infiltrate the country. Those cultural authorities who do not share that liminality in many ways cannot relate to, or rather have no direct access to, those who have temporarily cohabited or moved through

that liminal space. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that the direct confrontation in the liminal space between the liminoid hero and the liminoid villain – to put it more directly: the unique ability of the liminoid hero to confront and defeat the liminoid villain – is a function (albeit a combative one) of Turnerian *communitas*.

Because of the inherent unknowability of those who choose to move through liminal space, because of the fundamental terror attached by a disciplinary society to anything that cannot be observed or classified, and because of the fear of "mixture" or "pollution" attached to this "community" of travelers, I will therefore argue that the Gothic ambiance we find in the fiction of the late-Victorian period derives from literary constructions of liminal spaces and the liminoid characters – both villains and heroes – who move within them. These characters move to and from, through, under, and around London, and as they do so they generate the sensation, terror, mystery, and adventure for which Gothic fiction is known. They are culturally ambiguous and transgressive (they blur the lines between respectability and villainy, between social darling and pariah, between pursuer and pursued). They encounter the sublime landscapes and cityscapes of the present while chasing down or running from the sins of the past. They pollute the city with their menace or they pursue those who threaten to engage in such pollution.

Perhaps most importantly, as they inform the focus of this project, these characters expose and explore through their Gothic ambivalence the cultural fears of mixture and secrecy and hidden menace that were trickling into the seemingly confident metropolis at the dawn of the twentieth century. According to Peter Ackroyd and other historians of the city, one of the hallmarks of this period in London was the sense that the city contained everything and maybe everyone in the world; a typical Londoner walking

through the streets was constantly bombarded by the representatives of various cultures, native and foreign alike.   This was fitting for an imperial city that considered itself the de facto capital of the world. Turner suggests, however, that "the portrayal of monsters and of unnatural situations in terms of cultural definitions […] may have a pedagogical function in forcing those who have taken their culture for granted to rethink what they have hitherto taken to be its axioms and 'givens'" (*Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* 256). The texts under study here offered a contemporary reader a look at characters whose outward appearances hide the potential for sinister, world-changing menace and invited the notion that every one of the thousands of the reader encountered each day *might* also harbor such dark secrets. The Gothic impact of seeing behind the mask of one liminoid villain is that an observer must begin to see masks on every face.

The authors of these works, writing in different genres (mystery, science fiction, aesthetic literature, classic Gothic, spy thriller), and writing from varied cultural perspectives (Stevenson, Doyle, and Buchan were Scottish; Stoker and Wilde were Irish; Hornung was English), deployed the idea of liminal space in different guises, thus highlighting the perpetual anxiety that such an urban center is more nebulous than knowable.   London is shown to be not just a place that includes liminal space, but is rather a place of mobile overlapping liminalities, of broken physical and cultural boundaries, of unknowable constituents – a place that embodies the epistemological uncertainty of modernity just as the Panopticon embodied the Enlightenment's desire for epistemological certainty. It is the anti-Panopticon, a place of secular pilgrimage to which, and through which, villains travel to lose themselves in the unholy qualities of anonymity, freedom from restraint, freedom of self-redefinition, freedom from sight. If

ever there were an illusion that the metropolis might be holistically defined or definable, these tales, through the sketchy light they shed into the many levels of darkness that blanket the city, succeed in dispelling that illusion. Such disillusionment anticipates, I argue, the cultural work of the long twentieth century, the exploration and expression of the unknowable that marks the literature and philosophy of modernity.

A Note on Terminology: My Use of "Late-Victorian"

Throughout this project I refer to the writers and texts I study as "late-Victorian." Surely no justification needs to be offered for labeling E.W. Hornung a late-Victorian writer; his collection *The Amateur Cracksman* was published in 1897, still well within the Victorian period. As for Doyle, though *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was published after Victoria's death, most of his Sherlock Holmes stories were written within the Victorian period and, we might say, drew for Doyle's readers the iconic picture of late-Victorian London. The novel, in other words, makes use of the same ambiance – the same hansom cabs and gaslights and dense fog – that colors the earlier, wholly-Victorian stories. It is only the late-Victorian label as applied to Buchan's work that requires a bit more explication.

Other scholars have made the argument that Buchan should be considered a Victorian writer. Gertrude Himmelfarb famously labeled Buchan "The Last Victorian" in *Victorian Minds* (1968). Roger Kimball argues that what Himmelfarb had in mind was:

> that extraordinary British amalgam of seriousness and eccentricity, energy and lassitude, adventurousness and propriety, world-conquering boldness and coddling domesticity; industry, yes; duty, yes; honor, yes; even a

certain priggishness—all that but so much more: the whole complex

package of moral passion at once goaded and stymied by spiritual

cataclysm that made up (in Walter Houghton's phrase) "the Victorian

frame of mind." (19)

Kimball goes on to suggest that Buchan "occupied a late-model version of that frame as

magnificently as anyone" (19).

Similarly, Robin W. Winks says, "In many ways, Buchan was the last of the

Victorians, though he was still a young man when Queen Victoria died" (v). Winks

suggests that Buchan's Victorianism can best be seen in the degree to which he "believed

deeply in the British Empire, in Scotland (and England), in the precepts of his

Presbyterian upbringing, and in the energizing power of the democratic intellect" (v).

Winks adds that readers "who are determined to see Buchan as the epitome of

conventional imperial, Victorian, and Edwardian views can find evidence of that

conventionality[5] in his most popular work" (v), a group of texts of which *The Thirty-Nine

Steps* certainly forms a part.

Scholarly assessments of the author aside, my primary reason for labeling

Buchan's work as late-Victorian has to do with the source from which Buchan, in league

with Doyle and Hornung, seeks to generate the Gothic terror that drives his fiction.

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[5] Winks rightly resists any sweeping pronouncement of Buchan's conventionality; he says that those who "trouble to read [Buchan] entire will discover an unconventional mind" (v). I would certainly agree with Winks's assessment of Buchan's broader work. As this current project only covers *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, however, I will hold that Buchan's early popular novels should be labeled works of late-Victorian fiction. I would be much more hesitant – in fact, I would be resistant – to suggest that Buchan should be considered as conventionally and exclusively Victorian as, say, Dickens or Stevenson.

Botting's description of nineteenth-century Gothic places my texts (even Buchan's)

firmly within the Victorian tradition of Gothic fiction:

> Less identifiable as a separate genre in the nineteenth century, Gothic
>
> fiction seemed to go underground: its depths were less romantic chasms
>
> or labyrinthine dungeons, than the murky recesses of human subjectivity.
>
> The city, a gloomy forest or dark labyrinth itself, became a site of
>
> nocturnal corruption and violence, a locus of real horror; the family
>
> became a place rendered threatening and uncanny by the haunting return
>
> of past transgressions and attendant guilt on an everyday world shrouded
>
> in strangeness. The attempt to distinguish the apparent from the real, the
>
> good from the bad, evident in the standard Gothic device of portraits
>
> assuming life, was internalized rather than explained as a supernatural
>
> occurrence, a trick of the light or of the imagination. (11-12)

For Buchan, as for Hornung and Doyle, the primary source of terror in his text comes

from London itself, and more specifically from the degree to which the city serves as a

swirling labyrinth in which identities are confused, classes are mixed, and the potential

for misidentifying friends and enemies is at its greatest. For these reasons – as well as for

his occasional use of phrenology (a staple of Victorian fiction), his main character's

evident dismay at the new technological weapons his enemies possess and his equally

evident longing for the ways of the (Victorian) past – I have chosen to label Buchan's

text, like Hornung's and Doyle's, as late-Victorian.

<u>The Structure of this Study: Exploring Liminality and the Gothic in Doyle, Hornung, and Buchan</u>

Following this introductory chapter, I will explore in Chapter 2 the nested liminal spaces, and the liminoid characters who use these spaces as the loci for a contest of intellect and will, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In this novel, the lead combatants – Sherlock Holmes and the man who calls himself Jack Stapleton – each choose to occupy a liminoid position within the culture of late-Victorian England. Sherlock Holmes constructs for himself a position as a crime-fighter with unorthodox cultural freedom: he is neither a private citizen uninvolved with stopping criminal conduct in the city, nor is he a professional law enforcement officer sanctioned by the state (and presumably restrained by official regulations) to stop such activity. He operates betwixt and between those two positions, free to move throughout or to and from the city as the demands of his particular case dictate.

Holmes is therefore positioned perfectly to counter the moves of a criminal, the man called Jack Stapleton, who operates under the guise of an innocent and respectable school teacher-turned-naturalist and who similarly enjoys the freedom to move without hindrance through London as well as the English countryside. As soon as Stapleton follows Sir Henry Baskerville to London, the battle between Holmes and Stapleton is joined, transforming every space they occupy into a liminal locus for their liminoid maneuvers. Whether in London or on the moor at Dartmoor, the spaces through which these characters move become transformative spaces in which Stapleton acts outside the bounds of legal social behavior and Holmes, in his unofficial legal capacity, tries to stop him.

A key component of this text is the manner in which liminal spaces are nested within each other to form a complex liminal warren through which these liminoid characters might move. We see, theoretically, the juxtaposition of Turner's notion of "cunicular" (i.e. warren-like) liminal space and a Gothicized version of the modern labyrinthine city. London, in the case of this text, is shown to be so crowded, so full of motion, so infused with liminal spaces that even the great Sherlock Holmes cannot counter his adversary there. He confesses to Watson that he is "checkmated" in London and that the locus of contest must be moved elsewhere. Within the city of London, a field of battle within this conflict, Holmes occupies the smaller space of 221B Baker Street, a private sanctuary in which Holmes is free from the flow of the city, free to let his mind wander free. Holmes and Watson also travel down the crowded Baker Street, across Oxford Street, and down Regent Street in pursuit of the disguised Stapleton; their pursuit and his escape transform even these public streets into ambiguous spaces of private, hidden contest. The city is also dotted with train stations, each a swirling complex of liminal travel from which a disguised villain might emerge and into which that same character might disappear. Two stations, Waterloo and Paddington, play prominent roles in this text as they receive those coming to the city (and bringing their mysteries with them) from the outside, including Stapleton and Sir Henry Baskerville, and as they serve as points of embarkation for Watson and later Holmes as they leave to confront a threat that they can't defeat in the city.

These stations serve also to expand, in a sense, the jurisdiction of London. The "neighborhood" of Dartmoor, far to the southwest of London, becomes in this text an extension of the field of contest because of the easy rail communication between the city

and the moor. This place, too, is filled with nested spaces: it stands within England as a place of contest and also contains the Stapleton house, Baskerville Hall, and several other houses and prehistoric huts that become smaller liminal spaces within the moor itself. And of course, Grimpen Mire, the marshy abyss with a secret entrance known only to Stapleton, becomes the ultimate liminal space in this text, the place to which even Holmes cannot gain access while his opponent remains alive. These spaces within spaces, both in the city and on the moor, infuse every setting in the text with a Gothic sense of the unknown, a sense that around every corner or down every alley or behind every outcropping or rock there might lurk a force for which these characters (and thus, the readers) are not prepared.

In the end, as I will argue, Stapleton's evil scheme is defeated only by those liminoid movers able and willing to cross jurisdictional boundaries, to purse liminal villainy into the liminal spaces of contest into which the official forces of observation could not see. Watson's freedom from the structured demands of regular employment plays a key role here, as does the artistry in disguise and the genius in deduction for which Holmes is so well known. Without these components, especially as they are augmented by the bravery and mobility of Sir Henry Baskerville, the cooperation Holmes eventually receives from the official policeman Lestrade, and the efficiency of the British transportation and communications systems, the villain may have succeeded in his plot, undermining both Charles Baskerville's legitimate claims to his family's wealth and, in a larger sense, the British system of patrilineal legacy. And yet, because of the devious intelligence of the villain's liminoid strategy, and the ease with which this villain carries his scheme into the very heart of London by exploiting the mobility and the crowds that

form its very fabric, London is shown to be at the mercy of those from outside the city savvy enough to appropriate the fundamental dynamics of the modern city for their own evil ends. That which makes the city great, in other words, is shown in this text to be that which makes the city vulnerable. Holmes serves as the city's only line of defense in this case, but in doing so he compromises his own cultural standing: because he is even more adept than his nemesis at infiltrating spaces, Holmes comes to embody an ambiguous cultural position as a savior who cannot be policed.

In Chapter 3, I will examine another point of connection between Turnerian liminality, Gothic sensibility, and the impact of mobility: the crisis of cultural categories attached to the mobile liminoid character. E.W. Hornung's title character in *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* is a gentleman-thief, a famous and well-respected cricketer who pursues a secret life of crime. Like the better-known Dr. Jekyll and Dorian Gray, Raffles hides his liminoid villainy in arguably the most frightening manner possible: he appears openly in public as himself. His evident outward respectability – his prestigious lodgings in the Albany, his prowess on the cricket pitch, his impeccable evening dress and polished manner – belies his scandalous secret behavior. He, like Jekyll and Gray, is free to move throughout the city without raising suspicion because his outward respectability renders his criminal activity inconceivable.

And yet, as we learn from "The Ides of March," the opening story in *The Amateur Cracksman*, Raffles certainly is a criminal and has been for some time. Bunny, the narrator, recalls the rumors in their school days that Raffles was "in the habit of parading the town at night in loud checks and a false beard," a rumor that was whispered but essentially dismissed as too incredible. When Bunny approaches Raffles for financial

assistance, however, Raffles admits that indeed he is a thief and offers Bunny a chance to join him in his thievery. That very night, Raffles and Bunny walk in the middle of the night down the foggy streets of central London – Raffles remarks that the London fog is "a perfect godsend to the criminal classes" – and proceed to rob a jewelry store in Bond Street. In doing so they enter the premises, tiptoe up and then down sets of stairs, and break through several doors, revealing the nested underground spaces that at once provide supposed security for the jewel seller and actual security for the thieves. Raffles and Bunny occasionally hear the footsteps of a policeman and a watchman outside, but because of the visibility (or audibility) of this police presence, they are easily able to circumvent the mechanisms of the law.

Like Dr. Jekyll and Dorian Gray, and unlike Stapleton or Buchan's Richard Hannay, Raffles faces no real liminoid opposition. As an outwardly respectable and yet secret criminal character, he occupies a tenuous and ambiguous cultural position in which his greatest threat is that of scandal. Indeed, he often speaks of his fear of "disgrace," an abstract enemy that would destroy the façade of his respectability and reveal the criminal beneath. Raffles takes careful precautions to avoid this fate, even going so far as to establish a second residence, this one a small studio hidden in the dark warrenlike streets of Chelsea, in which he maintains disguises and other trappings of an alternative identity. This subterfuge allows him some additional freedom of movement, and yet (again like Jekyll and Gray) his total freedom is restricted: he can never completely disappear from the limelight because of his fame as an athlete, and therefore he can never be too far away from his disguises in Chelsea.

Raffles's cultural and moral ambiguity is enhanced, for readers, by the essentially sympathetic manner in which he is portrayed. Though he is undoubtedly villainous, and though he exploits the darkness of night and the foggy labyrinth of London for his own criminal ends, he is not without his own very pronounced set of ethics. He has no qualms about stealing, but he considers it a breach of hospitality to steal from the host of a home to which he had been invited. He has no qualms about certain types of crime, but he (usually) sees murder as barbaric (though in "Wilful Murder" [sic] he does plan to murder a blackmailer). One might say that, through his actions and through Bunny's descriptions, Raffles emerges not as an unethical character, but rather as differently ethical. There are circumstances under which he will pursue his criminal activity and circumstances in which such things are "not done," in his words. Though he defines right and wrong differently than those who share his cultural context, he is not without a sense of right and wrong and, adding further to his ambiguity, not without a sense of honor, courage, and honesty. He enjoys a sense of social and cultural freedom, because of his liminoid movement, that affords him the opportunity to set his own rules, though he does follow them without fail.

An ambiguous liminoid character – or, in Jeffrey Cohen's conception, a monstrous character – like Raffles must cause a degree of uncertainty and anxiety regarding a character like Sherlock Holmes. The techniques and qualities upon which both characters rely are not dissimilar: both are courageous, intelligent, and refined; both are secretive even to the point of disguise; both engage in contests of will and skill beyond the scope of the official mechanisms of law. Raffles asks the reader to consider whether an admitted criminal can be viewed as admirable, or whether a liminoid villain,

despite his ingenuity and courage and his special brand of honor, should be considered fundamentally evil.

Regardless of a reader's (or society's) answer to that question, those contemplating such characters like Raffles (and Dr. Jekyll and Dorian Gray, perhaps) must admit that, as these characters prove themselves capable of evading official police detection, the security of the culture depends on to some degree on the willingness and the ability of the liminoids themselves to follow a self-imposed set of ethical rules. Readers must trust that someone moving in criminal circles (and I'm including Holmes here) will follow some cultural, if not legal, rules, setting up an inevitable conceptual oxymoron. And yet, given the real presence of liminoids like Jack the Ripper, the idea that the propriety of culture is to some degree at the mercy of those the culture can't contain is a frightening proposition, at least to those interested in the disciplined maintenance of an orderly status quo. Though seemingly good natured, and though usually more interested in "good sport" than vulgar social destruction, Raffles nevertheless operates very near (and sometimes across) that nebulous boundary between culture and Gothic chaos.

That metaphorical, shifting boundary often serves as the locus of liminal contest in the fiction of this period. As Cohen argues, that boundary is patrolled by characters who are recognizably a part of, and recognizably separate from, the culture of which the boundary forms the edge. As I argue that both liminoid heroes and liminoid villains might be said to fit that description, I also contend that the success of the liminoid hero in confronting and defeating the liminoid villain arises from their shared status, their direct contact in the liminal space. Sherlock Holmes only defeats Stapleton when he agrees to

step into the liminal space of contest. Similarly, Van Helsing, Harker and their

colleagues only defeat Dracula by leaving their normal social spheres to engage in

liminoid travel. And, as I will argue in Chapter 4, the hero of John Buchan's "shocker"

The Thirty-Nine Steps, Richard Hannay, is qualified to defeat the German spies because

of his direct liminal contact with them. Turner contends that those who share liminal

space develop their own community, or *communitas* as he calls it, that is born solely from

this common liminality. Those who do not share that liminality cannot relate to, or rather

have no direct access to, those who have temporarily cohabited or moved through that

liminal space. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that the direct confrontation in the

liminal space between the liminoid hero and the liminoid villain – to put it more directly:

the unique ability of the liminoid hero to directly confront and defeat the liminoid villain

– is a function (albeit a combative one) of Turnerian *communitas*.

In *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the conventional apparatus of cultural defense, here the

British police, attempts to protect the country against a mobile menace, but in doing so

they pursue what they identify as the primary menace (the narrator and protagonist

Richard Hannay) and overlook the far more sinister mobile threat (German spies intent

on defeating Britain in the imminent Great War). As he tries to piece together a puzzle

left to him by a murdered spy, Hannay finds himself at once the pursuer and the pursued:

he seeks to solve the riddle of the Black Stone political conspiracy while evading capture

for the murder of the spy who left him the clues to that riddle. More generally, he moves

between the forces of cultural defense and cultural threat, and thus might be said to

embody both: he resists arrest, a clear and direct violation of the orderly operation of

disciplined British life, and in doing so actually defends that way of life against a moving

threat designed to evade the observation of institutionalized cultural defenders. He patrols the border, if you will, between culture and chaos, and as he does so, his liminoid movement through liminal space places him in direct contest with his nation's liminoid enemies, those who exploit that space for their own menacing ends.

Hannay in this novel shares with many other characters under consideration here the hallmarks of liminoid movement through liminal space: he chooses to embark on the journey; he frequently employs disguise; his success relies on his ability to keep moving. Like Raffles, Jekyll, and Dorian Gray, Hannay's movements are restricted by forces that compel his proximity (in this case, Hannay must return to London by a certain date to prevent an assassination). Like those same characters, Hannay finds in crowded, labyrinthine London the sublime combination of anonymity and faceless menace that create in the city a threat to be evaded and, later, a sanctuary to be sought. And like the team of characters in pursuit of Dracula, Hannay finds readily available in London and, by extension, the rest of Great Britain, the modern means of conveyance that enable him to both pursue and evade his enemies. His travel by train and car to and from London and throughout the English and Scottish countryside transforms several seemingly innocuous places into spaces of liminal contest: the moors, crags, burns, fields of heather, and stands of trees in the Scottish countryside; the various cottages and farms in which Hannay anonymously receives "Samaritan" hospitality; the rural and suburban places in which Hannay and his adversaries hide in plain sight (through the use of disguise); the meadow in the midst of tall Scottish hills overlooking the sea, a place that serves as a secret aerodome. The wilds of the barren Scottish countryside, for Hannay and for his readers, become sinister, or Gothic, in part because of their barrenness, but

also because it is in these pristine, presumably empty spaces that Hannay forges a connection with the enemy.

As with the other characters under consideration here, Hannay's presence in London is not without its own form of menacing ambiguity. Hannay is British, having been born in Scotland, but he has spent most of his life in the Colonies and returns to England essentially as a foreigner. His skill at disguise and movement, his ability to evade capture when sought for murder and to infiltrate private spaces in pursuit of his enemies, renders him (like Holmes and Raffles) rather menacing to a disciplinary society built upon the classification of its citizens. Moreover, Hannay's connection with his German enemies – especially as these enemies pass themselves off as British – raises the subversive notion that London might serve at any given time as both a staging point for foreign aggression and a sanctuary for a menacing Other. For all of the service he renders his native country, Hannay's classificational uncertainty calls into question the various distinctions – between British and Foreign, Self and Other, and so on – that help define the very culture Hannay works to preserve.

In the end, London emerges in this text as the capital of a rural and urban United Kingdom in which foreign schemes of aggression can be hatched and hidden, as can domestic schemes of defense. The city becomes a place that should no longer consider itself the impregnable center of an increasingly intermixed and volatile new world. It is a place, rather, that might serve as the ideal modern receptacle of anonymous foreign aggressors, and perhaps even the base from which they run their operations. One might see London now as part of a macro-communitas, connected by rail and road and air to the conspiracies and villains that inhabit the island of Great Britain and the world beyond.

Though the metropolis, and by extension the country, rests behind a highly sophisticated official system of defense, in Buchan's conception that institutional system of defense might still rely, occasionally, on the unlikely and seemingly subversive communitas between the secretly heroic individuals who patrol the borders of culture and those who, unobserved, threaten that same border.

In chapter 5, I will draw some conclusions from these studies, particularly as they illuminate the degree to which the Gothic texts of the late-Victorian period posited a nebulous urban center whose security is always in question and whose very nature renders it difficult to defend and impossible to know. What will emerge from these conclusions, I believe, is a portrait of London as a remystified Gothic labyrinth, as a terrifying and exhilarating locus of broken boundaries and ever-present liminality that has, in its capacity as a modern center of progress, opened itself to communion with an equally terrifying, unknowable modern world.

Scholars of the Gothic have concluded that part of what informs the Gothic is an obsession with the "vestiges" (to quote from Robert Mighall) of the past. These late-Victorian writers, while borrowing from the literary traditions of the past, have also given contemporary and future readers a Gothic legacy of liminality, and particularly of liminality as attached to place. Though liminality as a status ascribed to people is by definition both temporary and abstract – none of the characters discussed in this project is permanently liminal – the notion of liminality as ascribed to a place, meaning that the particular space has been for a time the locus of unseen contest, is permanently transformative. The people, in other words, might be said to fall betwixt-and-between the social systems that would otherwise contain them categorically, and thus might be said to

be, for a time, ambiguous and to some extent invisible to social observation. The spaces in which such invisibility takes place, however, must necessarily be permanently marked as spaces at least partially outside the scope of observation; once a space has been the site of liminal contest, it must always be seen as the potential site for another (or for ongoing) liminal activity. The impact of these tales, then, as they portray liminoid movers and liminal space, is to transform London (and the places to which London is connected) into a permanently liminal space, or rather a place that is inherently suitable for liminal activity and thus, at least potentially, always the site of unseen liminal struggle. The city becomes a place that should no longer consider itself the impregnable center of an increasingly intermixed and volatile modern world.

Whereas those who governed and inhabited the increasingly modern turn-of-the-century London might wish for the "perfectly governed" utopia Bentham conceived in 1785, a knowable city whose every space and every inhabitant might be observed and categorized and controlled, the Gothic writers of the late-Victorian period demonstrated that London was full of unobservable spaces peopled by unknowable characters, and more frighteningly that the out-in-the-open spaces of the city might be occupied by people whose respectable appearances belied the devious schemes and sinister intentions kept hidden from view. These texts, my study will show, reveal a modern London that holds much more in common with the labyrinthine, menace-filled Gothic castles of yore than with the idealized dream of a perfectly contained, easily governable metropolitan machine, and further that the late-Victorian metropolis as envisioned by these authors was already burdened by a sense of unknowability that dovetails nicely into the

epistemological anxiety often associated with modernist literary and philosophical

constructions.

CHAPTER 2

The Transformation of Contested Space: Baker Street, Grimpen Mire, and the Battle for Thresholds in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

There are certain challenges inherent to the study of Sherlock Holmes. Most of these challenges derive from his iconic status, or to put it another way, the degree to which general readers already know, or think they know, his character and the city he inhabits. Even those who have not read the Holmes stories know Holmes's name, his occupation, and the name of his closest associate. They know the deerstalker cap made famous in Sidney Paget's illustrations in *The Strand*, even if they don't know the name of the artist or the title of the magazine. They know about the great detective's mental acumen, his unconventional and reclusive lifestyle. They know his address, the foggy streets of his city, the hansom cabs and gaslights. It can be difficult, as many scholars have pointed out, to move past this cultural baggage and to study the character and his city without losing one's audience in the various preconceptions – the movie depictions, the pop-culture references – surrounding this most knowable character.

And yet, the Holmes we find in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* seems not to follow most of the formulaic traits conventionally assigned to him. The city we find in this novel, though a hansom cab is featured prominently and though we do visit the rooms at 221B Baker Street, seems not to adhere to the gaslight-and-fog template most people associate with Holmes's London. Indeed, in this novel, the first Holmes story to be published after Holmes's death in the arms of Professor Moriarity, both the character

of Holmes and the structure of his city move into shadowy areas of epistemological

uncertainty. Doyle explores in this text the fundamental difficulty of acquiring a

complete understanding of the elusive detective and the labyrinthine English capital he

defends. He does so, I will show in this chapter, by placing Holmes in an unusual

position. Holmes is not, in this text, depicted as an intellectual superior, a genius hero

poised to defeat all villains by the exercise of his brilliant mind, but rather as a culturally

ambiguous liminal combatant engaged in a desperate struggle to command the thresholds

that delineate an interconnected set of contested physical spaces.

This story has at its heart not just the solution to the crime of who killed the elder

Baskerville and now threatens the younger, nor the questionable existence of the

supernatural Hound, but more broadly an exploration of the connections to be made

between the seemingly uncivilized Dartmoor and the hyper-civilized London. As both

the detective and his criminal counterpart both cross the gap between these two, so are

the spaces aligned. The contest between these two men reveals in both places a similar

structure of nested spaces which only those who undertake this contest prove themselves

able to negotiate. Holmes wins the contest, but only just. And what remains is a

permanent pall on Dartmoor as well as the sense that what happens in Dartmoor might

also happen in London. There's an anxiety at play here as Doyle explores the protective

barriers between city and country, between civilization and primitivism, between order

and anarchy. Holmes stands in the gaps between those dichotomies: he is a private

citizen, and thus can go where the police cannot necessarily go; he uses information

(from maps and name registries) generated by the disciplinary regime but uses that

information for his own private investigation; he concerns himself with justice, but he

does so without official police aid until the final moments of the case. But in filling these gaps he also adopts the techniques of the criminal; he becomes a source of cultural anxiety because, in his liminal position, he can't be considered wholly respectable or perhaps even trustworthy. By showing himself to be equally comfortable and competent in civilized London and primitive Dartmoor, he becomes by definition not quite as civilized as the culture he preserves, and thus not as wholly knowable or commendable as some readers might suppose.

The places, too, seem less knowable in this text. Doyle's novel reveals the presence in both Dartmoor and London of various nested spaces hidden like the inner layers of a Russian doll within the larger framework of the meta-spaces called Dartmoor and London. Whereas the legal gaze of this disciplinary culture might be able to scan the surface of these locations, the nested spaces remain hidden, impenetrable to that gaze. That such spaces might exist in Dartmoor is far from surprising; it's dark there, and foggy, and, in the text at least, laden with superstition. The nested spaces in London seem more familiar – Baker Street, Regent Street, Paddington Station – and thus less likely to be thought of as contested spaces. And yet the text reveals that such spaces are intrinsic to London just as they are to Dartmoor. Both locations contain settings suitable for this contest – the liminoid struggle that takes place outside of the gaze of the disciplinary regime (and often, though in plain sight, outside of the awareness of the general public). The characters who enter these spaces are transformed by the battles that take place there. The locations themselves are also transformed – once they've been shown to be suitable for liminoid battle, they must permanently be considered at least potential sites for such contests.

This shared nature of the spaces in the city and the county, a theme that emerges in this novel because Holmes persistently asserts it, points to the cultural anxiety behind Raymond Williams's contention that fiction written near the turn of the 20th century demonstrates a strong urban bias. "City experience," Williams writes, "was now becoming so widespread, and writers, disproportionally, were so deeply involved in it, that there seemed little reality in any other mode of life; all sources of perception seemed to begin and end in the city, and if there was anything beyond it, it was also beyond life" (235). Williams's argument finds a voice in most of the other characters in *Hound*. Both Watson and Mortimer seem to view the rural region of Dartmoor as lesser, as past, as distant from the center of modern life. Stapleton might be said to view the city and country differently as well: he transforms the dog he buys in Fulham Road, London into the legendary Hound in Dartmoor, indicating that he sees Dartmoor as more susceptible to supernatural legend, to superstition and manipulative terror tactics, than the more sophisticated city. For Holmes, though, the two places are united. He constantly draws connections between them. In the opening scene of the novel, Holmes uses a parallel linguistic structure to draw an equivalency between himself and the country doctor Mortimer: "What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime?" (345). He restates facts in Dartmoor that he has already stated in London, he spends time admiring art in both places, and he establishes a space of his own in both places, all in an effort to unite the urban and rural spaces because in this text the default consideration, as per Williams's argument, is that the places are distant and dissonant. Holmes works hard to connect the places because everyone else in the text

assumes the places are fundamentally disconnected. In doing so, he threatens to reveal that the seemingly civilized city is also, in a sense, as primitive as the moorland.

Of course, as the novel shows, the ways of life in these two places are distinct – the topography is different, the population of one far outnumbers the other, the precise physical nature of the nested spaces is inherently different (the Mire versus, say, Baker Street). But because of the readily available modes of transportation, the two places are separated by a single threshold (entered at Paddington at one end and the corresponding station at the other). And because of his liminoid mobility, and the degree to which he has been transformed by his position as a cultural defender into something other than just a London gentleman, Holmes is the perfect person to guard that threshold. He insists on the connection between these two places because in a sense he embodies that connection; he is equally at home in either space, he commands points of observation in both places, he negotiates the intricate nesting of public and private spaces in both locations. This of course makes him culturally ambiguous – he is both a savior for London because he mans the threshold and a danger to London because he brings with him the taint of all that comes from outside. The cultural implication of all this is the anxiety that London, with its increasingly modern infrastructure, is actually becoming more and more accessible to and vulnerable against the rural places connected to the city by its modern modes of transport. That is, as the city becomes more modern, it also becomes more open to the premodern, and most frighteningly, to the primitive. Those carrying emotional, familial, cultural baggage – and sometimes the menace – from the less-civilized outside world can easily come to London and then disappear into its fabric. Stapleton, with his emotional baggage, his family history, and his criminal agenda, easily masters the city's

transportations systems and stalks his prey to the very threshold of Holmes's door before once more disappearing into that transportation system. The city is defended this time, of course, as Holmes defeats Stapleton. But Holmes does nothing to remove the modern urban conditions which allowed this invasion in the first place. As Holmes and Watson head for the opera at the story's close, the implication hangs in the air that Holmes has emerged victorious *this time*, but that another battle might be forming somewhere just outside of the many thresholds providing access into this most vulnerable and anonymous city.

Holmes makes known early in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* his understanding of the importance of such thresholds. During the opening moments of the story, Holmes makes this proclamation: "Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair which is walking into your life, and you know not whether for good or ill" (345)[6]. The footsteps on the stairs belong to Dr. (or, more correctly, Mr.) Mortimer, the country physician who has returned to 221B Baker Street ostensibly to retrieve the walking stick he left there the previous night. Holmes's proclamation makes it clear, though, that with Dr. Mortimer's return, and with his approach up the staircase, both Holmes and Watson stand at the threshold of a new case. He makes it clear, more specifically, that as a potential client approaches the literal threshold of his residential space, Holmes and, by association, Watson stand at the figurative threshold of a new chapter in their professional and personal lives, a chapter which they cannot yet read. For

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[6] I've chosen to use the text of the novel found in the anthology *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes: 37 Short Stories and a Complete Novel from* The Strand *Magazine*. Doyle's writings are presented in this anthology, according to the Introduction, "in complete facsimile […] as they first appeared in the famed British magazine *The Strand*."

Holmes, in the case of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and others, his residential and professional space – the famous rooms in Baker Street – serve both as his own private citadel and as the space from which his investigative contests are conducted. By climbing the steps, Mortimer approaches both the physical and metaphoric threshold beyond which stands the combative space commanded by Holmes and Watson.

Few scholars have yet explored the significance of the threshold that separates 221B Baker Street from the rest of London, or indeed the significance of the liminal position Holmes occupies in the late-Victorian capital. One notable exception is Jesse Oak Taylor-Ide, who invokes the theories of Victor Turner (I do so as well, but differently, as I show below) to explain the manner in which Sherlock Holmes operates outside of the structured bounds of his society and the manner in which his headquarters in London play a part in that operation. "*The Hound of the Baskervilles*," Taylor-Ide argues, "illustrates how Holmes's passage between the world of society and the dark, polluting world outside it through ritual transformation is in fact the central theme that enables his solving of the mystery" (57). Taylor-Ide's description of the Turnerian process of ritual transformation resembles the description I offered in chapter 1; Taylor-Ide writes:

> Social theorist Victor Turner describes such ritual processes as symbolic dissolutions of the self, departures from the societal structure. This leads to a period of liminality, or anti-structure, where the individual is "betwixt and between" worlds. Eventually, a reintegration into structured society follows, with the individual assuming a new identity and role within that structure. The liminal world into which one crosses is often seen as

somewhat magical, certainly polluting, and in this case analogous to the "dark" foreign spaces of the empire. The individual is altered by this transition, and is often seen as somehow tainted by the experience, bringing back shards of the darkness like the dust clinging to a traveler's clothes. (56-57)

It is this dissolution of self, this separation from social structures, this experiential taint, that facilitate Sherlock Holmes's liminoid status and permit him to move freely, sometimes secretly, between and through the worlds Taylor-Ide mentions. To this extent my reading of this novel coincides with Taylor-Ide's reading.

Taylor-Ide postulates only a dichotomy of place in the novel, however, an opposition between the illuminated society of civilized Britain (equated in this conception with London) and the dark, exotic, foreign realms outside. Though he does well to explore the manner in which Holmes moves between these two larger realms, Taylor-Ide does not take into account the multiform complexity of each of those realms. In this novel, of course, the two principle places of combat and detection are London and Dartmoor. And yet each of those two realms is comprised of various smaller spaces nested within each other to create a hopelessly complex and pleasingly mysterious labyrinth that Sherlock Holmes and his opponent Jack Stapleton must negotiate. In Foucault's terms, these spaces become heterotopias, real places in which several conflicting spaces – or rather spaces in which traditional modes of power governance are thrown into question – are juxtaposed. Within the economy of this novel, London contains several liminal or transformational places, among them 221B Baker Street; the crowded avenues of Baker Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street; the Northumberland

Hotel; and Waterloo Station. Dartmoor is similarly comprised of nested liminal spaces, among them Baskerville Hall, the Yew Alley attached to the Hall, Merripit House, the prehistoric huts that occupy desolate stretches of the moor, the vast stretches of desolation marked only by gnarled vegetation and rocky crags, and the seemingly impenetrable Grimpen Mire. Each of these individual spaces is separated from their larger heterotopic locations, London and Dartmoor, by a threshold that must be controlled by one of the combatants. And therefore both locations (the city and the moor) are shown to be equally suitable for liminal contest because of the nested structure of the spaces that comprise both locales, because of the contested thresholds that provide access to those spaces, and because of the fact that both London and Dartmoor provide perfect cover for those who wish to engage in secret liminoid movements and liminal combat.

In her study of personal privacy in modern Chinese culture, anthropologist Deborah Pellow offers a multi-layered model of what can be called a nested society, a social structure that can be adapted to illuminate the structure of the Victorian society presented in Doyle's text. This model includes layers of society not necessarily visible to the official gaze of the disciplinary regime; as in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, these layers (levels 1-3 below) might only be seen by those who have private access or, more specifically, by those who cross the thresholds that separate these layers and thus control access to them. Pellow's five nested layers look like this (32):

1. Unexpressible internal space
2. Expressible internal space
3. Intimate space
   a. Sexual partner

      b.   Living space partners

      c.   Extended family

  4. Relational/social space

      a.   Apartment building

      b.   Neighborhood

  5. Public space

      a.   City

      b.   Nation

      c.   World

Pellow's model moves, as can easily be seen, from the most private of spaces to the most public, from the internal to the external. The smaller internal spaces are nested, from the top of her list down, within the larger, increasingly external spaces below them. There is a public (visible) threshold located between level three, "intimate space" – that which takes place behind closed doors, as the saying goes – and level four, "relational/social space," that which is located outside the private sphere. We can postulate that threshold as the divide (though the division has always been contested and messy) between what the official gaze of the law can see and what it cannot; the gaze can survey that which takes place in public and relational spaces but not, without just cause and the proper authorization, in intimate spaces, and certainly not in internal spaces. This model emphasizes external visibility as a means of knowing and draws a clear functional divide between what can be seen by outsiders and what cannot.

The private nested spaces theorized in Pellow's model and illustrated in Doyle's text, we should note here, function both as liminal spaces – they are guarded by thresholds and thus separate from the larger spaces in which they are nested; as such they

are suitable for transformation – as well as loci for the Gothic ambiance that pervades

The Hound of the Baskervilles and other texts of this period. Those spaces would be

lacking in the Gothic menace attributed to them in Doyle's novel, however, without the

terrifying potential, the inherent lack of cultural accountability, of those who move

through those spaces. As I argued in Chapter 1, those who willfully engage in liminoid

mobility serve to illuminate the combative and transformative (and heterotopic) potential

of the seemingly innocuous spaces they occupy. Michel de Certeau refers to those who

live and move "below the thresholds at which visibility begins" as "practitioners of the

city" (153). De Certeau argues that "an *opaque and blind* mobility" (154; original

emphasis) characterizes the texture of the city and suggests that "the city is left prey to

contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach

of panoptic power" (155-56). Holmes and Stapleton, both practitioners of the places they

occupy, engage in such contradictory movements; that is, they seek to contradict, to

defeat, each other. To illuminate the hidden spaces in a text like *Hound*, they (and

characters like them) inhabit those spaces, engage in combat therein, and experience

transformation because of the battle. To inhabit and experience those spaces, such

practitioners must be free to move to and through them. To be free for such movement,

they must create for themselves the cultural liberty that allows such mobility. To create

that liberty, they must intentionally and temporarily remove themselves from all social

structures that would confine them, and then return from such spaces when the battle has

ended. Without this liminal process, the spaces themselves are just spaces; when they

become the sites for hidden combat, the sites in which a mobile Gothic menace is barely

defeated by a traveling hero, those nested liminal spaces within London and Dartmoor

become terrifying because of the potential menace hidden within them. It is the combination of the carefully delineated nested spaces, and the adroit movements of the lead combatants as they battle to control the thresholds that command those spaces, that accounts for the Gothic texture of this narrative and calls into question the knowability of the heterotopic metropolitan and rural realms depicted in the text.

As a practitioner of London, it falls upon Holmes to pursue Stapleton into and through any private spaces the villain tries to occupy. Holmes, headquartered in a private residence of his own, has access to private thresholds that public disciplinary officials (the police, which represent the legal gaze of the state) cannot reach because of their official standing, their fundamental inability to move in secret, their institutional inability to see below or beyond the threshold of external visibility. Holmes can dig deeper into the nested layers of his society than can the police, and can extend the threshold of visibility into private spaces and then occupy those spaces more readily than they can, and thus he's better equipped than they are to fight this battle because Stapleton makes this a battle of private spaces. For Holmes, the battle becomes a contest not just between London and Dartmoor, but rather between Baker Street and Grimpen Mire, a private, hidden battle between those who control the thresholds of two private spaces. Before such a battle can commence, however, Holmes must first justify the effort of the battle. And he does so, contrary to the explicit opinions of the other characters in this novel – who hold the dominant cultural assumption, as described by Raymond Williams, of a fundamental divide between city and country – by equating the seemingly disparate places of the ultra-civilized London and the primitive, barbaric Dartmoor.

Equating Spaces: Private Thresholds in the City and the Country

If London were impregnable, if it had nothing in common with Dartmoor, if what took place in the countryside posed no threat to the metropolis, then it would make no sense for Sherlock Holmes to bother with this case. Holmes's jurisdiction, to borrow an institutional word, is London. If Stapleton represented a visible force, and if he only occupied or moved through visible spaces, Holmes's services would not be required. The London police would have been much better equipped in manpower and resources to deal with such a visible threat. The city and the country are initially connected in this novel simply by the virtue of Holmes deciding that a legend and a potential murder in Dartmoor are worth his attention in London because of the probability of a perpetrator who moves discretely through private contested spaces. But the connection, at least in Holmes's mind, is stronger than that. In his initial meeting with Dr. Mortimer, and subsequently throughout the text, Holmes takes every opportunity available to connect the two places. The fact that he chooses to do so highlights the notion that people generally considered the two places disparate. We can read Holmes's efforts to equate London and Dartmoor as a repeated insistence to a skeptical cast of characters, and presumably to a skeptical audience, that London and Dartmoor shared much in common including, most menacingly, a capacity for primitivism.

For Dr. Mortimer, the swirling metropolis of London represents the ultimate escape from the physical and spiritual barrenness of the moor. He considers the two places fundamentally different. Early in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Dr. Mortimer reports to Sherlock Holmes, "It was at my advice that Sir Charles was about to go to

London. His heart was, I knew, affected, and the constant anxiety in which he lived, however chimerical the cause of it might be, was evidently having a serious effect upon his health. I thought that a few months among the distractions of town would send him back a new man" (352). It is the "distractions of town," the swirling activity of the metropolis, that encourages the good doctor to send his patient there in hopes that the patient would recover from the melancholy inspired by the Gothic moor. Stapleton, of course, hopes to exploit those same distractions for an entirely different purpose: within the busy confines of the swirling metropolis, he might be free to stalk his prey – the aging Sir Charles and the wealth he represents – with impunity. Whereas possible criminal suspects would be few on the moor, the millions of the city's inhabitants would provide the perfect shield for his criminal plans. Mortimer, citing what he believes to be a fundamental difference between London and Dartmoor, prescribes the attractions of a civilized city as a cure for the barrenness of the uncivilized moor. Similarly, Stapleton seems to recognize in the structures of civilization the perfect cover for what his culture would consider his "uncivilized" moorland plot.

And yet Holmes contends that civilized London is no more immune to darker forces than primitive Dartmoor. In response to Dr. Mortimer's evident belief that the forces aligned against Sir Charles's heir are supernatural, Holmes says, "But surely if your supernatural theory is correct, it could work the young man evil in London as easily as in Devonshire. A devil with merely local powers like a parish vestry would be too inconceivable a thing" (356). Evil is inherently mobile, Holmes might say; evil that cannot move is incomprehensible, which means that London, the bastion of advanced and enlightened civilization, is just as vulnerable as the much-less-civilized Dartmoor. Or, to

put it more bluntly: London might be, at a fundamental level, just as primitive (i.e.

subject to uncanny forces) as Dartmoor. In fact, Holmes later commends Sir Henry, the

heir to Baskerville Hall, for his plan to leave London and return to Dartmoor: "I think

that your decision is a wise one. I have ample evidence that you are being dogged in

London, and amid the millions of this great city it is difficult to discover who these

people are or what their object can be. If their intentions are evil they might do you a

mischief, and we should be powerless to prevent it" (368). The city is by nature –

because of its immense mobile population – a difficult place in which to offer someone

protection; enemies are difficult to detect among the moving masses. The difference here

between city and moorland is not the civility of one and the lack of civility in the other;

it's merely, for Holmes, a question of population density. This point is emphasized

further after Holmes and Watson unsuccessfully chase the disguised Stapleton down

Oxford and Regent Streets, a chase that epitomizes the degree to which the dynamics of

the city can be used by a clever villain to achieve his ends. Through a mix of disguise,

careful planning, and the intelligent use of modern modes of transportation inherent to the

city, Stapleton in effect defeats Holmes on his hometown, leading Holmes to shift the

locus of battle elsewhere. The city, even for its most revered and astute defender,

sometimes presents insurmountable difficulties because of its multiple liminal spaces and

the degree to which an intelligent liminoid villain might exploit those spaces.

It becomes clear in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and other works in this late-

Victorian period (particularly John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, which I will explore

in Chapter 4) that a similar conclusion may be drawn about the relatively uncivilized

countryside. The barrenness of the moor, when fully explored, seems full of spaces in

which criminals like Selden and observers like Holmes might hide. Plots can be undertaken in secret in the countryside just as easily as in the city, and those who prefer the direct approach to things (like Watson and Sir Henry), by virtue conducting business out in the open, are constantly assailed by unseen threats hiding in unseen places. In *Hound*, the contest undertaken in London is carried out in Dartmoor, but the mode of the contest – hidden identity, shielded movements, carefully-plotted conspiracy – is not changed. London is just as fit for such secrets as the moor, and vice versa. For every Grimpen Mire on the moor, there is a 221B Baker Street in London. For every Regent Street in London, there is a "moor-path" that "brings us to Merripit House" (380). To match the art gallery in Bond Street (365), there is the portrait gallery in Baskerville Hall (426). The parallels between the two locations, and between the nested spaces in each location, are pronounced indeed within this novel, despite the not inconsiderable differences in topography and population.

Perhaps with those differences in mind, Holmes goes out of his way on several occasions to unify in language these two locations. When Holmes speaks about place, he generally refers only to London and the moor; no other places, and certainly no places located between these two, are ever mentioned. At one point Holmes, in the act of deceiving Sir Henry, tells the baronet that he and Watson "will head to town" in order to better fight the battle; Sir Henry says he'd feel safer "going to town with them," and he appears to Watson to consider their leaving as a desertion (428). Holmes later tells his young helper Cartwright to "take this train to town" (428). These casual references overlook the fact that several "towns," and indeed a few cities, lie between Devonshire and London. And yet, in the economy of Holmes's language, the only "town" to which

Dartmoor might be connected is London. Further, in reference to Stapleton, Holmes

says, "I told you in London, Watson, and I'll tell you now again, that we have never had a

foeman more worthy of our steel" (423). This repeated pronouncement comes on the

moor shortly after Watson and Holmes meet with Stapleton and converse near the body

of the newly-dead Selden. Later, after the contest with Stapleton has come to an end,

Holmes nearly echoes his own words: "I said it in London, Watson, and I say it again

now, that never yet have we helped to hunt down a more dangerous man" (440). It

appears that in Holmes's mind, a fact known and uttered in London must be confirmed

and re-uttered in the context of the moor; knowledge in one place does not necessarily

survive the change in context unblemished. Or rather, the knowledge does survive, but it

cannot be assumed to do so. That which is true in London remains true in the

countryside, but it is only restated and considered true once more after it has been

verified in that countryside. The double pronouncement and the casual references linking

these two places demonstrate Holmes's persistence in countering the prevailing thought,

as represented in the text, that these two places are inherently disparate.

Holmes, seemingly unbothered by the differences in place as perceived by

Mortimer, Watson, and others, projects a confident, commanding image in whatever

liminal space he happens to find himself. True, he is temporarily defeated on his home

turf of London. But as he sets in motion his plan to invade the moor – his plan, at this

point, involves sending Watson to accompany Sir Henry to Baskerville Hall while

Holmes remains in London, ostensibly to attend to other business – he again finds his

bearings in the liminal space of a London train station. Watson looks back at the

Paddington Station platform as his train leaves for Devonshire and sees "the tall, austere

figure of Holmes standing motionless and gazing after us" (373). This space, by

definition a liminal (and also heterotopic) space through which pass masses of people of

indeterminate identity and unfathomable purpose, becomes in this instant a space

commanded by the detective. It is a threshold that commands access to the city, and in

this static moment Holmes claims the platform as his own. Nils Clausson points out that,

although the novel was subtitled *Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes* when it was

originally serialized in *The Strand*, the text presents a remarkably static story, at least in

its portrayal of Holmes, who is the very opposite of the action hero of an adventure story.

He is introduced in the first sentence of the novel "seated at the breakfast table," and such

a static image recurs throughout the novel. Holmes is most Holmes-like[7], Clausson

argues, when he is motionless (39). Clausson attributes this static depiction of Holmes to

the manner in which Holmes is presented both as an art critic – more precisely an

"aesthetic observer" (40) – and a piece of statuary in this novel. I'd prefer to see his

static nature in this novel as an illustration of the degree to which Holmes fully occupies

the spaces he inhabits.

　　　　As Holmes stands on the platform in Paddington, he both inhabits the physical

space and commands the metaphoric threshold it represents.   His height, his austerity, his

solid immobility in this moment foreshadow the Man on the Tor, the man who appears to

command the moorland scene over which he stands much as Holmes now commands the

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[7] In the context of Clausson's argument, I interpret "most Holmes-like" to mean that
Holmes in these moments of stillness is most intellectually engaged, most focused, most
logical, most perceptive. For Clausson, Holmes's physical activity channels some of the
detective's energy away from his mind, which is (according to this line of thinking)
Holmes's most important tool.

platform from which Watson departs. Watson describes for Holmes "the unseen watcher, the man of darkness" (405) as he first sees him: "As far as I could judge, the figure was that of a tall, thin man. He stood with his legs a little separated, his arms folded, his head bowed, as if he were brooding over that enormous wilderness of peat and granite which lay before him. He might have been the very spirit of that terrible place" (400). The posture thus described indicates a man who both inhabits and commands a space; the folded arms, wide stance, and bowed head reflect a man not under threat, but rather one who has time to contemplate the land below him, to consider the area under his control. Watson relates shortly after this passage that Sir Henry, who was with him on the moor when he sees this distant image, had not seen the Man on the Tor and thus could not feel "the thrill which his strange presence and his commanding attitude" had inspired in Watson. The Man on the Tor, of course, turns out to be Holmes himself; whether in his own guise in the contested liminal spaces of London or in disguise on the contested grounds of the moor, therefore, Holmes projects to Watson an image of stillness, of observation, of command. The man who (in this novel, at least) might be seen as the very spirit of all that makes London worth defending comes to embody, as Watson describes him here, the spirit of the moor as well.

Holmes's possession of the moor illustrates once more his ability to penetrate private hidden spaces the official police cannot. This penetration extends even to his seemingly comfortable association with Selden, the moor's most feared inhabitant (other than the Hound itself, of course). When Holmes and Watson discover that the dead body on the moor is not Sir Henry but is instead the fugitive Selden, Holmes cries, "It is not the Baronet – it is – why, it is my neighbour, the convict!" (421). This man, the "Notting

Hill murderer" as he is known on the moor (375), has inspired nothing but fear in the region; he is the very reason why Watson and Sir Henry see armed sentries when they first enter the region of Dartmoor (374). Holmes is aware of the history of this killer; Watson tells us that Selden's case "was one in which Holmes had taken an interest on account of the peculiar ferocity of the crime and the wanton brutality which had marked all the actions of the assassin" (375). This is the man who has brought the visible presence of England's disciplinary forces to the moor. And yet, this is the man whom Holmes refers to as his "neighbour." He essentially shares Selden's private space, the space the police can't find, because he can penetrate deeper into the nested levels of space that Selden occupies.

Selden's position on the moor, and Holmes's self-identification as his neighbour, provide yet another link between London and Dartmoor. Selden commits his crimes in London and for those crimes is sent away from the city. It would appear that his kind – uncivilized criminals – belong in the hinterland of Dartmoor and not in glorious London, according to the thinking of the day. Ejection from the city is his punishment, in other words. It is telling, then, in consideration of Holmes's social position and his hybridized cultural identity, that he voluntarily follows in Selden's footsteps, not only traveling to this uncivilized place but also taking up secret residence, as has Selden, on the moor. The disguised gentleman and the escaped convict thus share a neighbourhood connection and, for a time perhaps, a similar social status. Ironically, once Watson sees the Man on the Tor but before he learns that the man is Holmes, Watson finds more terror in the idea of a gentleman at loose on the moor than a murderer similarly free. Watson asks, "What passion of hatred can it be which leads a man to lurk in such a place at such a time? And

what deep and earnest purpose can he have which calls for such a trial?" (407). The still-disguised Holmes, far from feeling the fear of Selden commonly shared by the inhabitants of the moor, inspires a greater terror by his very presence, and more because of the seeming inexplicability of his intent. It is altogether more terrifying for Watson to contemplate the presence of a mysterious gentleman on the moor, a place no gentleman in his right mind, and with admirable work to do, would choose to inhabit. With his inexplicable presence and his authoritative bearing, as well as his willingness to share contested space with a fugitive murderer, Holmes commands the contested space of the moor because of the fear he inspires.

Of course Holmes's purpose on the moor is not to find Selden; the detective establishes himself there in order to combat the liminoid villain Stapleton. Given the ability of each man to cross the contested thresholds that delineate the space of the other, it must be clear that these two combatants and the places they represent stand united as the battle for thresholds commences. Holmes and Stapleton stand on equal footing far below the visible at the outset of this liminal battle. And from a Foucaultian view of cultural control, Holmes and Stapleton occupy positions of equal potential for menace: both have moved below the legal gaze and thus might, potentially, act with impunity in any number of threatening or destructive ways. London and Dartmoor have both been infiltrated – that is, the threshold of each has been crossed – by liminoid movers, by practitioners who make use of private nested spaces in each place to shield their movements. Both men have proved themselves qualified to command a private threshold and to transform private as well as public spaces into loci of secret combat even as common citizens still inhabit the places in question. As I will argue in the remainder of

this chapter, the personal battle between Holmes and Stapleton becomes a spatial battle between two recognizable, seemingly knowable places. The equation between these men and these places sets the stage for Holmes, at a considerable cultural cost to himself (as I will show below), to fight Stapleton in Dartmoor with the same techniques Stapleton used in London. Though the battle would seem to be a fight of city against country, civilized against barbaric, present against past, the contest instead boils down to a fight for the control of thresholds, regardless of location, and thus for the private spaces those thresholds command.

Nested Spaces: The Battle for Thresholds in London and Dartmoor

Two key components of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, as yet unexplored in scholarly work, are the manner in which the liminal spaces in the text are nested within each other to form a complex warren through which liminoid characters might move, and the degree to which this nesting serves to connect the culturally divergent places of London and Dartmoor. We see, theoretically, the juxtaposition of Turner's notion of "cunicular" (i.e. warren-like) liminal space with a Gothicized version of the modern labyrinth, both in the city and the countryside. London, in the case of this text, is shown to be so crowded, so full of motion, so infused with liminal spaces that even the great Sherlock Holmes cannot counter his adversary there. He confesses to Watson that he is "checkmated" in London and that the locus of contest must be moved elsewhere. Within the city of London, what Deborah Pellow would label a "public space," Holmes occupies the smaller "intimate" space of 221B Baker Street, a private sanctuary in which Holmes is free from the flow of the city, free to let his mind wander over the facts of the case at

hand. This space is visible to the villain Stapleton, but only from the outside. It is the

interiority of the space, accessed only across the threshold commanded by Holmes, that

provides the sanctuary for the private detective. Holmes and Watson also travel down the

crowded Baker Street, across Oxford Street, and down Regent Street in pursuit of the

disguised Stapleton; their pursuit and his escape transform even these public streets into

heterotopic and private places of contest. These are public spaces, of course, but the

battle in them is private; there's a metaphorical threshold of visibility here because

people on the street can see the combatants but can't actually "see" that a battle is going

on. The city is also dotted with train stations, each a swirling public complex of liminal

travel from which a disguised villain might emerge and into which that same character

might disappear. The metropolis is, one might say, filled with public and intimate spaces,

each commanded by a contested threshold, each brimming with liminal potential, each

necessitating careful negotiation, all together forming the complex maze in which

Holmes initially loses track of his enemy.

Something similar might be said about Dartmoor: it, too, is filled with nested

spaces, each with its own liminal and combative potential. We see several private

houses, most notably Merripit House, occupied by the Stapletons, and Baskerville Hall,

newly inhabited by Sir Henry. The moor is lined with desolate walking paths, as London

is lined with streets (though less densely, of course). It is dotted with prehistoric huts,

broken up by soaring tors and rock spires, frequently blanketed in fog (as London is), and

evidently inhabited by a fugitive killer. And in the heart of the moor is the deadly

Grimpen Mire, the citadel for the villain Stapleton, the base from which he launches his

evil scheme to murder the Baskervilles and claim the inheritance he believes to be his.

As with London, Dartmoor is not a single place; it is a heterotopic space filled with smaller, nested spaces, each of which hides secrets, each of which may be exploited by practitioners of these spaces, each of which waits to be occupied and commanded by the victor in this contest. Taken together, the similarly nested spaces of London and Dartmoor provide the loci for this contest and serve to tie together these two distant and seemingly divergent places.

For Holmes and Watson, the most important of London's nested spaces is their lodging at 221B Baker Street. In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, as with many of the Holmes stories, these rooms form the space in which the liminal contest is joined.[8] Mortimer first tells the story of the Hound here. Holmes and Watson find enough in his story, as told here, to pique their curiosity. Sir Henry is invited here (without knowledge of the legend of the supernatural Hound), ostensibly so he might contribute to Holmes's plans for this campaign, and receives these words from Holmes: "You shall share our knowledge before you leave this room, Sir Henry. I promise you that" (360). In short, 221B Baker Street becomes the launching pad for this liminal battle; it is a place of knowledge, deduction, investigation, and revelation. Only after two consultations here,

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[8] Of the twenty-four Holmes stories that appeared in *The Strand* before the publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, seventeen of those stories begin with a scene in Holmes's Baker Street rooms. Of the remaining seven stories: three begin in Watson's lodgings, each time just before travel of some kind; one begins in the liminal space of a train station; one begins while Holmes and Watson walk in the park before heading for Baker Street, where their case actually begins; one begins in a hospital in Lyons, where Holmes recovers from professional exertions before returning to London; and one begins with Holmes disguised as an opium addict crouching in a London opium den. In each of these seven cases, in other words, the story begins with Holmes and Watson in the midst of some liminoid endeavor.

with all allied parties gathering in this private space, does Holmes consent to set in motion the wheels of his investigation.

These rooms also serve as the space in which Holmes must spend time in "seclusion and solitude" before the contest begins. He tells Watson that it is only "at the hour of action" that he needs Watson's assistance. Before the action begins, Holmes withdraws into his own personal space, a space further set apart by the smoky atmosphere in which he cocoons himself, in order to sort out the details of the case at hand (357). That is, Holmes creates between himself and Watson a threshold of smoke; he withdraws into what Pellow calls an "inexpressible internal space" within the intimate space of these rooms. "It is a singular thing," Holmes says, "but I find that a concentrated atmosphere helps a concentration of thought. I have not pushed it to the length of getting into a box to think, but that is the logical outcome of my convictions" (358). Holmes's ability to separate himself from contact with others, and his notion that he might eventually go to the extreme of "getting into a box to think," serve as prototypical examples of the transformative detachment Turner describes. For Holmes, 221B Baker Street is that private box within the larger framework of public London.

Taylor-Ide argues that during his smoke-covered day, Holmes has "passed into a dark, liminal world outside the societal structure" and has now "returned cloaked in that darkness, which is manifested in the close, smoky atmosphere of the room" (59). I would contend, though, that during a case, 221B as a whole is a liminal space; it is necessarily a private, transformative space separated from the societal structure of the surrounding city by the threshold Holmes commands. Holmes is transformed here from a private citizen to a consulting detective; the stories he hears from potential clients in this room transform

from disconnected and inexplicable collections of facts and surmises into coherent

narratives decoded by Holmes himself. While a case is active, then, the rooms

themselves are always liminal spaces – they form Holmes's citadel, his command center,

his headquarters in a battle of contested space. He, not the disciplinary society that

governs the public spaces in London, determines who passes across the threshold. He

governs what takes place here. These rooms, therefore, also carry with them the sense of

Gothic potential; as private space, who can know what takes place within? To include

Holmes's private rooms in the societal structure of broader London, as Taylor-Ide would

suggest, would be to grant Stapleton access to those rooms even as he gains access to

other public parts of London, and thus to grant Stapleton a level of cultural penetration he

never achieves and to deny the sanctity ascribed in this battle to private space. In this

novel, it becomes clear that the allies in the contest are those (Dr. Mortimer, Sir Henry)

who have been welcomed into 221B Baker Street, while the opponent is he (Stapleton)

who was forced to wait outside.

This point is further highlighted by the fact that the Baker Street rooms also serve

as Holmes's private home. He chooses whom to admit, and under what conditions,

because the threshold is unmistakably his. He first meets Sir Henry while still wearing

his dressing gown (359). Later, before he rushes into the street in pursuit of anyone who

might be following Sir Henry, Holmes hurries to his room to throw on a coat – the mode

of dress he employed in 221B Baker Street was not suitable for movement on the street, a

distinction that sets apart the interior of 221B Baker Street as Holmes's own interior

private space (despite the frequency with which he welcomes individuals in need of

consultation). After admitting that he has been checkmated in London, Holmes cautions

Watson about the dangerous journey he is about to undertake on Holmes's behalf and admits, "I shall be very glad to have you back safe and sound in Baker Street once more" (372). For Holmes and Watson, Baker Street is a sanctuary, a safe haven amidst the dangers of London and the dangers of the countryside that reach the city.

After the contest is over, 221B Baker Street also becomes a place for reflection, as the title of the final chapter of the novel – "A Retrospection" – attests. Watson and Holmes sit "on either side of a blazing fire" in the sitting room, warm and comfortable on "a raw and foggy night" in late November in London. They are each in good spirits and have the solitude and comfort, the time and the luxury, to look back over their success. This is a place of memory and, because those memories recount victory in contested space, of mastery. This is also a place that serves as a repository of knowledge. Holmes reports to Watson that, after two conversations with Mrs. Stapleton, "the case has now been so entirely cleared up that I am not aware that there is anything which has remained a secret to us." He adds, "You will find a few notes upon the matter under the heading *B* in my indexed list of cases" (441). The rooms occupied by Holmes and Watson, then, contained a carefully organized index of secrets, the facts that explain a host of mysterious liminal contests in which the great detective has engaged and from which he has presumably emerged with the twin prizes of peaceful refuge and retrospective knowledge. One might conclude that that index is a nested space of distilled information, an intimate space of reflection, within the larger private space of 221B Baker Street.

It is outside of these secure rooms that Holmes and Watson, and for that matter Sir Henry, experience the menace inherent to the larger realm of London. Aside from the readily identifiable streets of the city – Baker Street, Oxford Street, and Regent Street

feature prominently in this novel, as in Holmes and Watson's failed pursuit of the disguised Stapleton – there are other sites nested within London that function as emblematic loci for the hidden battle (and Gothic potential) that drives this text. One is the unassuming Mexborough Private Hotel in Craven Street. Though presumably quiet and seemingly peaceful on the outside, given its status as a private hotel tucked into a side-street between the Strand and the river, the hotel features prominently in this battle as the place Stapleton and his wife lodge while the disguised Stapleton stalks Dr. Mortimer and Sir Henry in London. It becomes, in other words, Stapleton's temporary headquarters within enemy territory, a private space behind a threshold he controls, though his control is not absolute. Mrs. Stapleton first rebels here against Stapleton's control: though she is confined in this hotel by her husband, she still manages to send the newspaper-clippings warning to Sir Henry – "as you value your life or your reason keep away from the moor" (360) – a message that further piques Holmes's interest in this contest and perhaps helps to transfer the scene of battle from the hard-to-defend city to the seemingly more readable Dartmoor. For the combatants in this novel, as well as for its readers, this private hotel might be seen as a quintessential nested space: no one walking by the outside of a hotel imagines an imprisoned wife (or sister, as she was considered) within. The novel emphasizes that private spaces potentially shield from view any number of untold, perhaps unimaginable undertakings that might have an equally unimaginable impact on public events. These are Gothic realms, the fundamentally uncontrollable, invisible places where menace might be born.

Two other important spaces nested within the confines of the city are Waterloo Station and Paddington Station, the swirling liminal spaces, respectively, through which

Sir Henry arrives in London and into which a disguised Stapleton disappears, as well as the place from which Watson leaves the city for the moor. These stations represent metaphorical thresholds between the city and the surrounding countryside. For anyone, like Holmes, hoping to defend the city from external invasion, these stations (and the other train stations that dot the city and connect it to the larger British landmass) must come to epitomize the hopelessness of negotiating a population in motion. The language of the text, though subtle in this regard, highlights this hopelessness, particularly after Watson and Holmes chase Stapleton toward Waterloo. When Stapleton's cab "flew madly off down Regent Street," Holmes "dashed in wild pursuit amid the stream of traffic," only in a moment to emerge "panting and white with vexation from the tide of vehicles" (364). The cabbie John Clayton later describes the end of the journey, saying the Stapleton paid his two guineas and then "away he went into the station" (372). Given the rushing-water references made earlier, "away he went" seems fitting for the swirling motion awaiting Stapleton in the station; these terms might as easily be used to describe one's interactions with a whirlpool or rushing river. There is moving chaos within, a chaos that language does not penetrate. One emerges from such a place into the comparative peace of the city, or one leaves the comparative peace of the city and disappears into the swirl. With the exception of Watson's glimpse of the confident Holmes standing on the platform in Paddington (373), the narrative gives the impression that, with their thousands of people entering or leaving the city, these stations become unreadable even for the city's greatest detective. I would suggest that this is why Watson makes a point of noting Holmes's commanding posture in Paddington; Holmes's confidence in this place is all the more striking, as is his posture atop the tor, because

these places – the train station and the moor – are places of mobile instability, places by definition difficult to command.

These railway stations serve to expand, in a sense, the jurisdiction of London. The "neighbourhood" of Dartmoor, far to the southwest of London, becomes in this text an extension of the field of contest because of the easy rail communication between the city and the moor, and because Holmes has already equated the spaces and the menace therein. Dartmoor, too, as I mentioned above, is filled with nested spaces: it stands within the public space of England as a place of contest and also contains the private spaces of Merripit House, Baskerville Hall, and several other houses and prehistoric huts that become smaller liminal spaces within the moor itself. And of course, Grimpen Mire, the marshy abyss with a secret entrance known only to Stapleton, becomes the ultimate nested space in this text, the threshold of which even Holmes cannot cross until the contest is complete. These spaces within spaces, both in the city and on the moor, infuse every setting in the text with a Gothic sense of the unknown, a sense that behind every threshold or down every alley or behind every outcropping or rock there might lurk a force for which these characters are not prepared.

The moor is depicted by Dr. Mortimer as an outpost of civilization (351). It is peopled, he says, by few "educated" men and is shrouded with "romantic" superstitions and "fairy tales." Mortimer reports that several people on the moor had recently seen the Hound; these people include "a hard-headed countryman," a farrier, and a moorland farmer. "I assure you," Mortimer concludes, "that there is a reign of terror in the district and that it is a hardy man who will cross the moor at night" (356). Despite its desolation, however, the area is fully mapped: while still comfortably ensconced in his own rooms,

Holmes sends down to Stamford's for the Ordnance map of that area. In a sense, a complete topographical knowledge of this place is held in London and, more importantly, is available for examination in the rooms at 221B Baker Street (358). And yet, though it is fully mapped, Dartmoor is still a place of Gothic ambiance. The map, much like the disciplinary regime that produced it, can "see" only the upper levels, the most public and visible levels, of Dartmoor. The place itself, especially the more private spaces to which Holmes must gain access, are not visible on the map or to the disciplinary powers who must rely on mapping for knowledge of a place. Holmes, like any private citizen in London, has access to institutional knowledge (in this case the map); he couples this access with the ability to use what he learns and, most importantly, the access to private spaces only available to private citizens. But from his rooms, his view is as limited as the view of the disciplinary regime in charge of policing such public places, which is why he sends Watson to the moor in person.

Watson's first personal views of this uncanny space set the tone for the Gothic menace he expects to find there and establish the limits of the help he and Holmes can expect from the police. His initial description of the moor, as seen from his moving train car, resonates with Gothic terms of both bleak barrenness and haunting atavism:

> Over the green squares of the fields and the low curve of a wood there
> rose in the distance a grey, melancholy hill, with a strange jagged summit,
> dim and vague in the distance, like some fantastic landscape in a dream.
> Baskerville sat for a long time, his eyes fixed upon it, and I read upon his
> eager face how much it meant to him, this first sight of that strange spot

where the men of his blood had held sway so long and left their mark so

deep. (374)

The moor, when Sir Henry and Watson first arrive, is patrolled by a visible and organized (read: disciplined) police force. Watson notes the presence, in the otherwise "sweet, simple country spot" that was the small train station in which they disembarked, of "two soldierly men in dark uniforms, who leaned upon their short rifles and glanced keenly" at the travelling party as they passed. Later, Watson, Baskerville, and Mortimer see this visible form of cultural discipline from the wagonette bearing them toward Baskerville Hall: "A steep curve of heath-clad land, an outlying spur of the moor, lay in front of us. On the summit, hard and clear like an equestrian statue upon its pedestal, was a mounted soldier, dark and stern, his rifle poised ready over his forearm. He was watching the road along which we travelled" (374). The driver of the wagonette explains that a convict has escaped from a nearby prison and that now the "warders watch every road and every station" (374). This visible exercise of disciplinary force calls to mind Foucault's argument (as I described in Chapter 1) that, in response to an "exceptional situation" like the plague, the policing power of a disciplinary society "is mobilized; it makes itself everywhere present *and visible*" (205; my emphasis). Clearly Selden, the Notting Hill murderer, presents just this type of exceptional situation for the residents of Dartmoor, as he undoubtedly did for residents in London before his arrest and conviction. And yet, the police in Dartmoor fail to find Selden because they can't penetrate deeply enough into the private culturescape of the moor and soon disappear from the text altogether. Selden and later Stapleton and Holmes, all practitioners of this place, move in primitive realms below those in which the police operate.

Despite the descriptive powers for which Watson is so well known, it is left to the liminoid villain himself, Jack Stapleton, to provide us with our best description of the private spaces of the moorland. He is the character who shows Watson the deceptive peril of the moor – that the seemingly green fertile patches actually represent deadly bogs. He is the character who calls the place "uncanny" (382). Freud's sense of the uncanny as that which used to be canny fits well with the Neolithic huts Stapleton points out on a nearby hillside; in ancient times ordinary or familiar (canny) private dwellings, the huts now infuse the moor with a haunting, rather spectral (uncanny) ambiance. It is also Stapleton who first suggests that surviving the challenges (and, we might add, the weight of legend and history) inherent to the moor might take a level of acumen uncommon among those who come here. We first see the moor superficially through Watson and Sir Henry's eyes as they approach Baskerville Hall. But we don't see the moor in all of its Gothic menace until Stapleton, the disguised Gothic liminoid villain, shows it to us. This is fitting, of course, because it is in essence his chosen liminal space of operation.

It is fitting, too, that Stapleton feels as comfortable on the moor as Holmes undoubtedly feels in London. He is a practitioner of the moor even as Holmes is a practitioner of the city (though Holmes soon joins him as a practitioner of the moor as well). Stapleton says to Watson, "You never tire of the moor. You cannot think the wonderful secrets which it contains" (380). And he's correct in a literal sense: Watson indeed cannot think of the secrets the moor contains because he has no experience there, no knowledge. Watson questions Stapleton about the difficulty of knowing the moor – it is a place, by nature, of epistemological uncertainty to an outsider who, like Watson,

cannot see beyond the seemingly innocuous surface of the landscape. As a public space, according to Pellow's model, it can be known by outsiders, but only at a surface level. It is also a private space, though, particularly for one who comes to master its more private, harder to see elements. Stapleton explains to Watson that the "bright green spots" that seem "more fertile than the rest" actually represent the Grimpen Mire, a place in which, says Stapleton, one false step "means death to man or beast." Stapleton then continues: "And yet I can find my way to the very heart of it and return alive" (381). Under his guise as a naturalist, the many explorations he's made over the moor during his two years there seem in keeping with his profession. As a liminoid villain, these excursions are crucial because his power rests in his superior knowledge of the liminal space he inhabits. His is a threshold of knowledge; by knowing the space he controls access to the space, and by controlling such access, he exercises power over all who enter there. The moor is for Stapleton what London is for Holmes: a home base, a place where knowledge means power and threshold control, and a place in which the liminoid mover might find security in his superior knowledge and from which, therefore, he might launch his schemes.

Of course as a visitor to the moor and a combatant in this battle, Watson does not share Stapleton's comfort in Dartmoor. He has not crossed the threshold (in this case experiential) that makes him at home here. "The longer one stays here," Watson writes in a letter to Holmes, "the more does the spirit of the moor sink into one's soul, its vastness, and also its grim charm" (385). It is a place of sublime, uncanny, Gothic contrast. It is also a place both distant from the heart of modernity and yet proximate to the legacy from which that modernity was born. Watson writes to Holmes that on the moor "you have left all traces of modern England behind you, but on the other hand you

are conscious everywhere of the homes and the work of the prehistoric people" (385). He sees these homes as an outsider views a public space: he sees the exterior, visible surfaces; he's left only to speculate about the secrets hidden behind the thresholds, a speculation that leaves him feeling distinctly out of place. "As you look at their grey stone huts against the scarred hill-sides," he writes to Holmes, "you leave your own age behind you, and if you were to see a skin-clad, hairy man crawl out from the low door, fitting a flint-tipped arrow on to the string of his bow, you would feel that his presence there was more natural than your own" (385). Freud suggests that two forces account for the emotional impact people experience when we encounter the uncanny: "the strength of our original emotional reaction to it, and the insufficiency of our scientific knowledge about it" (945). Despite his understanding of the topography of the place – and remember, he has seen the totality of Dartmoor on a map – Watson never gets over his initial fear of the place or his incomplete knowledge of its hidden spaces. The uncanny nature of this place disconcerts him. He is keenly aware of his outsidership in Dartmoor.

Watson's discomfort stems in large part, of course, from his knowledge of the multiplicity of hidden spaces contained within the moor. That is, he knows that the moor contains such spaces, and knows also that he can't see into them. If this region were simply a flat plateau, a featureless empty wasteland openly visible for miles all around, Watson would certainly not have been so agitated by the atmosphere of the place. As he finds it, though, the moor is full of nested spaces suitable for the concealment of all kinds of untold primitive menace. Watson writes to Holmes, in reference to the escaped murder Selden, that a fugitive from justice would have no trouble at all concealing himself on the moor: "Any one of these stone huts would give him a hiding-place" (386).

Watson controls none of the thresholds of these huts and therefore cannot see inside them. And because Selden is a fugitive from justice, and therefore both mobile and by definition outside of the scope of the disciplinary gaze of the police, he might be anywhere. This uncertainly in turn transforms each rock, each crevice, each cave, each minor depression in the land into a potential hiding spot for the fugitive. For Watson, this means that the killer might be miles away, or just around the next outcropping, a disconcerting state of affairs for one not acclimated to the moor, to be sure. Watson's uncomfortable presence in this part of the text serves to show by contrast Stapleton's mastery over the moor.

The villain's mastery, however, does not extend to every space on the moor. Despite his knowledge of the Grimpen Mire and his ownership of Merripit House (the name of this home seems significant: "merry pit," a sense of outward happiness masking despair just beyond the threshold), not every threshold belongs to Stapleton. The space he most desires to command is Baskerville Hall; indeed, this desire drives Stapleton to embark on this liminoid campaign to begin with. Ironically, this conception of the battle between Holmes and Stapleton as a battle for the thresholds of nested spaces renders Baskerville Hall nearly irrelevant in this contest. With its Gothic façade, the "long dark drive to where the house glimmered like ghost at the other end" (375), the warren of private and intimate spaces so carefully described by Watson that comprises its interior, the Hall becomes nearly as much of a red herring in this case as the legend of the supernatural Hound itself. True, the Hall stands on the moor as a miniature London, a place of inherent value, of art and culture, of various nested private spaces as well as a number of thresholds that open onto the moor. One thinks of the window through which

Barrymore and his wife communicate with Selden by candlelight; or the door through

which Sir Charles first caught a glimpse of the Hound that cost him his life; or the narrow

Yew Alley, that transitional space between the Hall and the moor and thus the threshold

through which the Hound infiltrated (by the death of Sir Charles) the lives of the

Baskervilles. The Hall, though, never welcomes Stapleton; as in London, Stapleton never

establishes a private space there for himself. Watson mentions in passing that Stapleton

"came over to call upon Baskerville on that first day" (386), but otherwise Stapleton fails

to gain access to the private space he most covets. And, for that matter, Holmes is

welcomed there, but only after he has established himself on the moor already; his

presence in the Hall is accidental after the moorland discover of the dead Selden. The

character in this contest who spends the most time in the Hall is Watson, who we have

already established was never more than a guest, a visitor and outsider, in Dartmoor. The

Hall serves as the object of Stapleton's campaign, a place from which minor plotlines are

launched (i.e. the Barrymores and Selden), and a place where visitors to the moor might

be housed, but for all of its Gothic ambiance and threshold potential, it never serves as a

place of direct contest between Holmes and Stapleton.

One of the many anonymous, seemingly innocuous ancient huts standing on the

moor, however, does serve as a primary place of importance in this battle. Whereas

Watson seems never to rise above his outsidership regarding the mysteries within this

novel, even after he has been welcomed across many of Dartmoor's contested thresholds,

Holmes readily makes himself a practitioner of the moor and seeks from the vantage

point of a carefully chosen Neolithic hut to dictate the course of the battle with Stapleton.

He is able to do so because, as I've argued, Holmes repeatedly equates London and

Dartmoor in both language and his physical presence; he makes himself at home as easily in one as the other. More specifically, he seems to have no qualms about inhabiting this moorland space and thus connecting with the primitive[9]. Of course he does this without telling Watson, leaving the outsider to figure things out for himself. One of the most suspenseful moments in this novel occurs as Watson, doggedly in pursuit of some answers, pauses "on the threshold" of the hut, the nested space he knows to be the hiding place of the Man on the Tor. Walking warily, Watson relates that the "unknown might be lurking" in the darkness of the silent hut or might be "prowling" on the moor (414). His verbs here certainly add to the Gothic tension of the moment and the ever-present menace of this unknown man on the moor. One might argue, indeed, that all of the mystery, the menace, the darkness and emptiness and silence, all of the unknown forces that seemed to inhabit the bleak inhospitable moor come to inhabit this moment as Watson stands poised on the threshold of this nested liminal space, this hut upon the moor. His position in this moment calls to mind the opening scene of the novel, where Holmes pauses for a moment to reflect as Dr. Mortimer approaches the threshold of 221B Baker Street. Two moments infused with palpable tension take place as characters stand at thresholds, the definitional liminal spaces of transition. In a text full of parallels between the two principle places of London and Dartmoor, it is noteworthy that both thresholds upon which the action hangs poised belong to Holmes.

Based on Watson's description of the interior of the hut – the makeshift, austere bed; the table littered with food; the note containing information about Watson's

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[9] This connection to the primitive must transform Holmes into a rather more ambiguous figure within the disciplined society of London, a point I explore below.

movements – it becomes clear that Holmes has essentially converted the hut into a field

office, a sort of 221B Baker Street in the very midst of the moor.   Jesse Taylor-Ide

argues that with his presence on the moor, Holmes acknowledges that he cannot simply

"ponder the case from Baker Street, amassing clues like puzzle pieces until he eventually

fits them all together" (62). Taylor- Ide suggests, rather, that in order to solve the

mystery of the hound:

> [Holmes] must enter into its domain on the moor, not merely as a visitor
>
> as Watson does, but as one who lets the moor permeate his own being. He
>
> must live in the ancient dwellings, meditating on the roots that connect
>
> civilized humanity to its darker origins. He must breathe the air tainted by
>
> Grimpen Mire, and listen to the call of the hound. He must, in short, pass
>
> through a ritual transformation and *become* the 'spirit of the moor' that
>
> Watson saw that night on the Tor. (62-63; original emphasis)

Taylor-Ide argues, we should note, that the moor is a liminal, contested space, but that

Baker Street is not. Baker Street, as Taylor-Ide describes it, is the detached, leisurely

realm where Holmes might ponder from afar the dynamics of a distant case. This view

overlooks the facts that the case was launched from Baker Street; that a disguised

Stapleton tracked his quarry right to the door of 221B and then lurked outside in a

hansom for several hours, presumably pondering how to gain access and defeat his

enemy; that Stapleton only flees London when he realizes Holmes and Watson are on to

him and that he therefore can carry forward his schemes no further in the city; and that

Holmes only dispatches Watson to the moor once the enemy (Stapleton) has been chased

away from the citadel (Baker Street). Holmes's rooms in Baker Street are therefore not a

distant perch from which Holmes decides to lower himself and enter the primary space of contest. Those rooms are, along with Grimpen Mire, one of the two primary loci of the contest.

Christopher Clausen, like Taylor-Ide, characterizes Holmes's occupation of a hut on the moor as an initiation Holmes must undergo (248). While these views have compelling points, I find it more useful to suggest Holmes occupies the hut not only to become acclimated to the mythos of the moor, but also to demonstrate that he has succeeded in shaping part of the moor to himself, and indeed that he literally occupies – claims for himself – a part of the enemy's contested territory. By transforming a moorland space into his own temporary home, and thus by commanding the threshold to that space, Holmes becomes for a time an inhabitant of Dartmoor or, to borrow de Certeau's term, a practitioner of the moor. He establishes a private space from which he might infiltrate other private spaces. The "initiation" Holmes goes through in order to enter the liminal space of contest happens much earlier – it happens in the opening moments of the story when Holmes welcomes Dr. Mortimer across his Baker Street threshold and agrees to hear his tale. The primary significance of Holmes's presence on the moor, and particularly his establishment of a moorland threshold, is that Holmes proves himself capable of creating and commanding a space for himself on the enemy's ground, whereas Stapleton is unable to establish his own private space in London or, even closer to home, in Baskerville Hall, the ultimate object of his campaign.

The stone hut Holmes chooses to occupy is strategically positioned at the center of the conflict. Watson, sitting in the hut and waiting for the return of the mysterious inhabitant, can see all of the key places of contest: Grimpen Mire, Baskerville Hall, a

blur of smoke from the village of Grimpen, the hill that hides the Stapletons' house. This position of surveillance, however, does not give Watson a sense of peace. "All was sweet and mellow and peaceful in the golden evening light," he says, "and yet as I looked at them my soul shared none of the peace of Nature, but quivered at the vagueness and the terror of that interview which every instant was bringing nearer" (414). At the very heart of the contest, and on the verge of what he believes to be a pivotal discovery, Watson feels nothing but vague, one might say Gothic, fear. In the context of liminal battle, the place of observation is terror-filled because the outsider, as Watson is, can see the public space of battle but not the hidden menace therein. For Holmes, however, the position of the hut is strategically perfect. As a practitioner of the moor, Holmes can see from his hut the whole heterotopic field of public and private combat.

Holmes's observational position in this hut and thus his establishment of a temporary private residence on the moor equip him (with Watson in tow) to penetrate to the very heart of the battle, to Grimpen Mire, the liminal citadel of the enemy and easily the most terrifying space of battle because of its perilous threshold. The mire becomes the central embodiment of primitive force in the novel, filled as it is with "green-scummed pits and foul quagmires which barred the way to the stranger" (439). One false step is enough to cost a traveler his life. What makes the Mire most suitable for Stapleton's headquarters, however, is not only the difficulty in negotiating the dangers of the threshold – the zigzagging course into the heart of Mire – nor Stapleton's evident mastery of those difficulties, but more precisely the degree to which the living, menacing bog renders inaccessible the private spaces Stapleton has created and hidden within the boundaries of the mire itself. Once they negotiate this natural gauntlet of decay and

danger, Holmes and Watson find evidence of Stapleton's past activity: a staple and chain used to restrain the Hound, gnawed bones, the luminous paste used to give the Hound its spectral glow, and other trappings of Stapleton's scheme. For Stapleton, that old tin mine is his 221B Baker Street – a place of planning and safety, a place in which to formulate plans and to which only those with his specialized knowledge have access, a place with a threshold as carefully guarded as the threshold Holmes commands in London. The mine in the mire is Stapleton's ultimate citadel, his headquarters and secret refuge. The measure of his menace lies in the strength of this position; he is nearly impossible to defeat because he is so firmly grounded in a place nearly inaccessible to anyone who might challenge him.

The moor, like London, is in this text a place of mystery. It is a contested space in which a mobile villain like Stapleton might find power, even as a mobile hero like Holmes, who comes to embody a disciplinary society's observational gaze into otherwise darkened spaces, might pursue him. From his commanding posture on top of the tor, and from his corresponding posture as Watson looks back from the train leaving Paddington, we might conclude that Holmes feels equally in control in either place. The nested spaces of London and Dartmoor present the type of mysterious secrets and intellectual challenges in which Holmes finds self-identification, in which the powers of his mind are most in evidence, in which the darkness presents no crippling fear because he, unlike others, can see into and make use of the nested darkened spaces and the many secrets therein. In fact, *Hound* depicts as culturally crucial Holmes's ability to infiltrate such spaces and make them his own. Without his efforts and abilities, the cultural authorities would have no way to stop the crafty liminoid villain, no way to access and take over the

thresholds the villain commands for himself. Holmes's presence in the realm below that

which is visible to the police provides the defense his society needs. Because of the

seemingly "primitive" means through which he provides that defense, however, Holmes

significantly compromises the purity of his cultural standing.

Dangerous Mobility: The Cultural Taint of Liminoid Agency

In *Policing Victorian London*, Phillip Thurmond Smith describes the cultural

anxiety intrinsic to the figure of the detective in Victorian disciplinary culture. Plain-

clothes detectives, as Smith explains, were often thought of by the general public as

spies. They were described rather disparagingly by the *Quarterly Review* as "those

human moles who work without casting up the earth lest their course should be

discovered" (Smith 61). When Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police Force in

London, he was determined, in his words, "not to countenance a system of espionage"

(Smith 61). He favored instead a clearly visible, uniformed, preventative police force,

calling to mind once again Foucault's notion of a visible force deployed to answer an

exceptional threat. Peel wanted to found his disciplinary regime on the principle that the

police force works as a visible deterrent against crime, in part to assure that the activities

of the police would be out in the open and thus theoretically subject to the same panoptic

discipline that police themselves were supposed to enforce. "The taint of corruption and

inefficiency that hung over the business of crime detection," Smith writes, "not to

mention the public sensitivity toward 'spies,' made the founders of the Metropolitan

Police reluctant to have detectives" (65). Governmental officials and members of the

public alike harbored considerable misgivings in this time about the undercover and thus

potentially underhanded practices of those who, like criminals themselves, operated

below the threshold of official disciplinary visibility.

Despite this cultural and disciplinary anxiety, however, detectives became an

important part of the disciplinary police force in Victorian London. These detectives

carried against them a considerable degree of cultural prejudice, says Smith, because the

undercover detective "was still locked into a web of interaction with the criminal world

that could not be avoided, bringing with it some potential for corruption" (69). And yet

they performed an invaluable service. "On more than one occasion," Smith reports, "the

police found themselves caught between the need for adequate intelligence from a well-

trained plain-clothes investigative body and the misgivings of the authorities and the

public about such a body" (70). It is not difficult to imagine that such a gap between

disciplinary need and public anxiety could be filled by an individual, a private detective,

perhaps, like Sherlock Holmes, whose abilities as a practitioner of the city allow him to

move with alacrity through spaces invisible to the uniformed police. For Holmes, this

movement comes with considerable cultural risk. Rather than maintaining the

respectable above-board cultural position that a gentleman with his talents and ethics

could hold, Holmes instead chooses to mingle in the underworld, to engage in the same

mobility and invisibility a criminal like Stapleton uses for nefarious purposes. Holmes

shuns the behavior that might distinguish him as outwardly respectable in Victorian terms

in favor of conduct that renders him useful, yet inherently dangerous (a status that

mitigates his respectability). He goes outside of the disciplinary system he seeks to

preserve. He allows himself to be transformed from a respectable gentleman into a

shadowy figure. His liminoid mobility comes at the cost of what could otherwise be his untainted cultural status.

In part the significance of Holmes's liminoid mobility in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is due to the menacing and successful liminoid mobility of his nemesis, the man who calls himself Jack Stapleton. Stapleton represents Holmes's most formidable opponent – more formidable, one might argue, than even the iconic Professor Moriarity – because of his ability to establish and command a liminal space of operations, a space that allows him free movement not only in his chosen neighborhood of Dartmoor, but also between Dartmoor and London and within London itself. He changes his appearance and identity, he uses the city's modes of transportation and communication against the city itself, and he constructs for himself a base of operations – the mysterious Grimpen Mire – that a victorious Holmes only manages to infiltrate after Stapleton has presumably died. Stapleton requires the great detective's most diligent and adept liminoid activity because he shows himself to be a master of that same activity[10].

Fortunately for those who enjoy the Victorian way of life he aims to protect, Holmes proves himself to be just as adept as Stapleton at slipping through culture's cracks in order to pursue his own agenda. He manufactures the social detachment needed for liminoid agency and then exercises the unrestricted mobility needed to engage in and maintain a liminoid battle in liminal space. That is, he masters the techniques of the

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[10] For more on the interchangeability of Holmes and Stapleton, particularly in the combative methods they use against each other in this novel, see pages 101-102 of Robbie Goh's article "Reading Holmes: Capital and the Sign of the Market in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*."

mobile criminal in order to catch that criminal. That mastery, however, does not come without a cultural price for Holmes.

Like Stapleton, who poses as a naturalist to give himself freedom of movement on the moor, Holmes constructs for himself a rather nebulous cultural position that allows him to move freely through (and under, and around) his otherwise disciplined society. Holmes, of course, is a detective, though not precisely so in the Victorian sense of the word as Smith uses the term above. Holmes is not, as are his Scotland Yard "colleagues" like Lestrade, an official police detective or inspector; he is not bound by the regulations and procedures of those governmental "detectives" charged with policing the populace, a liberty to move unfettered that ironically adds to the potential for menace he commands. Neither is he merely a private citizen, one who might rightly consider himself detached from the responsibility of investigating crimes and mingling with those who might perpetrate criminal activity in his home city. He experiences this criminal exposure without the regulations designed to keep official detectives in check. He is truly a free agent, at liberty to move on his own and, in a positive light, to assist those in both public and private spheres. In *A Study in Scarlet*, the first Holmes story, Holmes describes his position to Watson:

> Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of Government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault they come to me, and I manage to put them on the right scent. (24)

According to his own description, Holmes therefore operates in his own sphere, a realm positioned between the official disciplinary police and the general populace (including those who call themselves private detectives) under their protection and control. He is neither separated entirely from those who enjoy (and are confined by) disciplinary protection, nor is he bound by the rules that govern the implementation of that protection. He is free to move, in other words, through places unknown by those detached from the criminal realm and forbidden, perhaps, by the regulations restricting official detectives. His is, by definition, a liminal position.

The most important and most anxiety-ridden facet of this position, at least as it relates to Holmes's work in *Hound*, is that he is able to chase criminals and assist the police because of his access to private thresholds and his skill at crossing them. He derives this access from his initial cultural position: he commands the threshold of a private, transformative space in his job – the rooms in Baker Street – as the police, stationed in official public headquarters, do not. He therefore has deeper access into the nested levels of privacy because his entry point into the nested layers of his society is already below the threshold of official visibility. He is already, in de Certeau's term, a practitioner of the city. Of course this access gives him the power at any moment to abuse his position. This is the source of the cultural anxiety surrounding him. Still, Holmes defeats Stapleton in *Hound* because of the private access Holmes's position affords him. Victorian police commissioners recognized that official police officers simply cannot go everywhere a private citizen can go, even a citizen like Holmes who ultimately carries with him, indeed who embodies, an extension of the disciplinary power that limits the penetrative power of official disciplinary agents, which is why they

experienced anxiety regarding the use of plain-clothes detectives. They needed the private access these detectives could provide, but they didn't want to sanction the risk they took with such free agents. Holmes provides the perfect solution to their dilemma: he crosses the thresholds the police cannot cross (and sometimes can't even detect), while he absorbs (indeed, embodies) the cultural taint they fear.

In part, as shown in *Hound*, Holmes's ability to penetrate such spaces is facilitated by his use of disguise, a technique frequently associated with criminality and cultural threat. As I discussed in Chapter 1, liminoid movers (both heroes and villains) often find it necessary to render their identities ambiguous in order to move unnoticed through the liminal realm of contest. The act of disguise, fundamentally, is the act of mixing one's identity with the outward trappings of other identities. Both Mary Douglas and Victor Turner discuss ambiguity and mixture, aligning it with cultural pollution. Turner writes in *The Forest of Symbols* that the "unclear is the unclean," particularly in regard to persons in transition (i.e. liminal movement) who "are neither one thing nor another; or may be both" (97). Both Stapleton and Holmes engage freely in the act of disguise and thus envelope themselves in the type of unclassifiable identity Turner describes. Indeed, Stapleton's initial foray into his battle with Holmes indicates his mastery of this criminal practice; he first appears in the text as the bearded man in the hansom on Oxford Street who later tells the cabman that his name is Sherlock Holmes. The ruse fools the cabman and impresses Holmes, but more importantly it announces to Holmes that he opposes a crafty criminal and will need to adopt similar means to win the battle. Fortunately, Holmes is well-versed in the art of disguise. As Peter Ackroyd puts it, Sherlock Holmes "could have existed only in the heart of London" because of the

"subtle disguises available to the detective of the city." Ackroyd quotes Watson, who says that Holmes "had at least five small refuges in different parts of London, in which he was able to change his personality" (143).   In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes only conceals his identity once: "In his tweed suit and cloth cap," Watson tells us after he has discovered Holmes in the moorland hut the detective has appropriated, "he looked like any other tourist upon the moor." And yet it is this subtle disguise, the mixing of his identity into the surroundings he has chosen to occupy, that allows him to move into his enemy's space unnoticed and ultimately to gain access to his enemy's private thresholds. He sneaks into Dartmoor by the same method as the more garishly disguised Stapleton sneaks into London.

At times, though, a subtle physical disguise is not enough to mask the identity of the famous detective; when he needs his influence to extend beyond his physical reach or the burden of his own fame, Holmes accomplishes the cultural invisibility he requires by using other people to hide his presence or to cross thresholds he cannot cross because of his notoriety. Twice during his investigation of the Hound, Holmes employs the services of a boy called Cartwright. In London, Holmes seeks the services of someone who can search the hotels in and around Charing Cross in order to locate the remains of the clipped newspapers used to send Sir Henry a warning message. The famous Holmes simply cannot canvas the hotels in and around Charing Cross, as he asks Cartwright to do, without generating unnecessary and potentially damaging attention to his movements. Cartwright, however, with his negligible social standing as a fourteen-year-old messenger-boy, presents a useful counter to the famous Holmes: he is culturally invisible, whereas Holmes is anything but. He can, quite simply, go places Holmes cannot go. Or

rather, he allows Holmes to penetrate spaces otherwise unavailable to the great detective by, in a sense, embodying the detective's purpose. Cartwright is Holmes's disguise, if you will. In Dartmoor, Cartwright again enables Holmes to occupy and infiltrate spaces the great detective cannot hold on his own. Holmes tells Watson that Cartwright "has seen after my simple wants: a loaf of bread and a clean collar. What does man want more? He has given me an extra pair of eyes upon a very active pair of feet, and both have been invaluable" (417). The boy not only serves as an agent for the detective, but to some degree embodies the detective's agency itself. Holmes's presence on the moor remains a secret from the enemy, and even from Watson himself, because of the anonymity and invisibility the boy affords him.

Watson reconciles himself to being left out of Holmes's confidence in this phase of the battle in part because, as Watson contemplates Cartwright's role as Holmes's stand-in, he must certainly have in mind his own role in that same capacity. Holmes relies on Watson's qualities as a man of action, particularly when Holmes claims to be unable to attend to matters himself. While suggesting that Sir Henry should allow Watson to accompany him to Baskerville Hall because Holmes's duties require him to stay in London, Holmes tells Sir Henry, "If my friend [Watson] would undertake it there is no man who is better worth having at your side when you are in a tight place" (370). Watson is charged, as part of this assignment, with providing Holmes with careful reports about the events in Devonshire. He provides Holmes with eyes and with physical motion in the field of contest. Watson is therefore Holmes's physical stand-in; better than Stapleton's beard in London, or Holmes's tweed tourist suit, Watson perfectly embodies the extension of the liminoid mover's influence and the mixing of identities. Holmes,

vicariously through Watson, gains access to thresholds (at Baskerville Hall, for example)

in a manner that Holmes's fame, if Holmes had visited in person, would have disrupted.

Of course it must be acknowledged that no disguise is perfect. Watson provides Holmes

a physical presence but ultimately not intellectual representation. As part of his

instructions, Holmes says, "I will not bias your mind by suggesting theories or

suspicions, Watson; I wish you simply to report facts in the fullest possible manner to

me, and you can leave me to do the theorizing" (372).

It would be easy, based on the tone of these last instructions, to denigrate

Watson's position because Holmes seems not to respect his intellect. Watson, however,

provides two qualities – rugged mobile reliability and outward social respectability – that

Holmes needs in order for Holmes's pursuits to be acceptable. Echoing Holmes's own

words regarding the usefulness of Cartwright, the detective needs eyes and ears and

mobility in the social spaces from which Holmes must frequently absent himself in order

to pursue his own secret machinations. He needs someone to go where he can't go, in

other words, and he trusts no one in this regard more than he trusts Watson. At the same

time, he goes places Watson can't go, secret places of liminal contest that Watson, for all

of his ability, is not qualified to occupy. Watson becomes Holmes's anchor, so to speak,

in the disciplinary social system around and through which Holmes moves as, essentially,

a liminoid outsider. Thus, in this novel, he sends Watson to be Sir Henry's visible

defender while Holmes pursues his own invisible liminoid campaign.

A way to understand Holmes's liminal position, then, and particularly his use of

disguise and deception as a liminoid mover, is to consider why a man of his obvious

intellectual and cultural power needs a rather common man like Watson. In this novel at

least, Watson serves as the visible agent of a two-prong, visible-invisible campaign – he openly resides in Baskerville Hall while Holmes moves in secret across the moor. But Watson also lends an air of social credibility, a sense of structured belonging. He's a doctor; he frequently goes to his club; he thinks in a fairly pedestrian manner (he's more suited to physical action than to Holmesian unorthodox deductive thought). Perhaps most importantly, as is referenced in *Hound*, Watson gives Holmes a voice in a narrative form recognized by the disciplinary society that otherwise does not "officially" recognize Holmes's position. He writes the text of the case, an act of evidentiary record-keeping both the police and the public would value. Holmes even comments that Watson has underrepresented his own cognitive abilities in the many tales he (Watson) has shared with the public. Without Watson, then, Holmes's invisible liminoid machinations would remain invisible; no one would read of Holmes's masterful exploits if Watson doesn't write them down. He needs Watson in order to stay connected, and ironically to remain visible, in an otherwise disconnected invisible liminal position. And in this capacity, Watson provides the detective a service that no one – not Cartwright, not Holmes himself – can provide. Watson is, in a sense, the very embodiment both of Holmes's deception and his use of disguised agency, both of which allow Holmes to move against his enemy using the chosen techniques of the enemy himself.

Despite the respectability Watson's friendship and literary efforts provide him, however, Holmes is still tainted by the contact with the criminal element intrinsic to his position. The best evidence of this cultural taint can be found not only in how well Holmes knows his criminal adversaries, but more significantly in the degree to which those criminals know him. Holmes says to Watson, "From his knowledge of our rooms

and of my appearance […], I am inclined to think that Stapleton's career of crime has been by no means limited to this single Baskerville affair" (443). Holmes has enough exposure with criminal-types that he has become famous in criminal circles. He is, if you will, a celebrity among criminals, an adversary to be feared, certainly, but one so deeply involved in the culture of crime that his address and appearance are common knowledge among the criminal classes. In Stapleton's case, the criminal knows Holmes well enough to know his tactics as well. After losing Stapleton in the hansom chase, Holmes says to Watson: "The cunning rascal! He knew our number, knew that Sir Henry Baskerville had consulted me, spotted who I was in Regent Street, conjectured that I had got the number of the cab and would lay my hands on the driver, and so sent back this audacious message" (372). The "audacious message" to which Holmes refers is perhaps Stapleton's finest move, his most profound pronouncement that he knows his enemy well: as I mentioned above, just before he exits John Clayton's cab, the disguised Stapleton tells his driver, "It might interest you to know that you have been driving Sherlock Holmes" (372). Because of Holmes's fame (and his success as a liminoid hero), Holmes's name itself becomes a license for liminoid mobility. Stapleton knows his opponent well enough to know that the name "Sherlock Holmes" carries with it the power to engage, seemingly without suspicion, in activities that would otherwise seem irregular in the normal course of proper social behavior. When Stapleton's own name and face will not provide him with the liminoid mobility he needs, he simply employs the more liberating name of his enemy, a strategic move that Holmes himself is forced to admire. Holmes is known by those who operate in that sphere because Holmes chooses to operate there as well. He is the quintessential liminoid hero, but with that status he also shares a

connection, what Turner calls *communitas*, with a villainous, and thus culturally

undesirable, class of persons, people like Stapleton who necessarily come to know

Holmes (because of their cohabitation of contested liminal space) as well as he knows

them. Regardless of the protective service he provides his city, Holmes's occupation of

both the respectable and criminal spheres renders his identity necessarily ambiguous and

thus his cultural standing necessarily tainted.

The Perfect Gatekeeper: Holmes's Qualification for Defense

Jesse Taylor-Ide suggests that the final scene in *Hound*, when Holmes takes

Watson out for dinner and a night at the opera, represents Holmes's return to respectable

culture, thus somehow mitigating the cultural taint resulting from Holmes's close

association with Stapleton. "His clear espousal of British society," Taylor-Ide writes,

"reminds us that, despite the ambiguity of the triumph at the end of this tale, Sherlock

Holmes has not been consumed by the darkness" (66). While this night on the town

certainly represents Holmes's return from the ritual process of his liminal battle with

Stapleton, I disagree with Taylor-Ide's assessment that this return removes the cultural

taint attached to Holmes's position and his mastery of criminal practices. There is never

a sense in the text that Holmes has been purified of his criminal associations; like any

liminal initiate, according to Turner's conception of the process, Holmes returns from the

battle permanently transformed. In this case, he carries home with him a little of the

moor primitiveness; even in his London finery, one cannot forget how comfortable and at

home he seemed in the Neolithic hut in Dartmoor. Further, the night at the opera does

not mark the end of his possession of the transformative rooms in Baker Street. It does

not render him less knowable to the criminal classes he battles. And given the timeline of the other Holmes stories – the case of the Hound comes chronologically before Holmes's death in the arms of Moriarity – his night out with Watson does not signify the end of his detective career. There are more cases to come, more ventures into the ambiguous invisible world of crime, more work for this practitioner of the city to accomplish. No, the night out with Watson serves only to represent Holmes's return from liminal battle on this occasion, even as it serves to consolidate his ritual victory over Stapleton because Stapleton doesn't live to make a similar return. It is most telling that Holmes attends the opera on this night only with Watson, his partner in liminoid endeavor, a pairing that emphasizes the continuation of Holmes's rather isolated cultural position. We're left to wonder if anyone else would have agreed to accompany such a mysterious, potentially tainted figure on this social outing.

Holmes ultimately defeats Stapleton because Holmes sees through the false dichotomies – between city and country, between hero and villain – that would negate the perceived legitimacy of the threat an outsider might pose to the city and at the same time limit the power of the protectors of the city to counter such a threat. The common view of fiction in this period, as described by Raymond Williams, that what lies outside the city lies outside of life, would reduce Stapleton's threat to Victorian social order to little more than a trifling and primitive countryside matter. At the same time, Robert Peel's notion of policing, that those charged with the defense of the city should remain visible at all times and should avoid prolonged contact with the criminal classes, would render the city defenseless against a criminal like Stapleton who operates below the threshold of visibility. Holmes blasts through these two dichotomies in order to fight Stapleton on the

villain's own grounds and in the villain's own terms. Holmes in a sense extends his own

jurisdiction, and thus the reach of the city, by figuring out how to command space in his

enemy's realm. He crosses contested thresholds in both London and Dartmoor and thus

gains control of Stapleton's home bases, essentially removing the villain's power.

Holmes unites the heterotopic public spaces of London and Dartmoor by occupying

private nested spaces in both of them.

Perhaps Stapleton would have been better served to keep the two spaces separate;

by bringing the contest to London, he engages in liminal battle with someone more adept

at liminoid mobility than he is. By infiltrating London, however, even in defeat Stapleton

leaves a lasting impact on the city, and after this contest has concluded, leaves readers

with crucial questions. Jesse Oak Taylor-Ide articulates one such concern: "[I]f

civilization (i.e. Holmes's habits in Baker Street) can be so easily carried into the

darkness, could the reverse not also be true? If the boundaries between these worlds are

so permeable, how easy might it be for another such figure, one more affected by

darkness, to transport darkness back to civilization?" (63). The novel seems to suggest

that this infiltration would be quite easy indeed because of the cultural fabric of the city

itself. In London, Stapleton finds on Fulham Street the raw materials (in this case, a big

dog) out of which he might conjure a supernatural moorland legend. He tracks his quarry

(Sir Henry) throughout the city and right to Holmes's private threshold using the

technological resources – the train, the hansom, the means of physical disguise – that the

city makes available to its inhabitants and visitors. He menaces the city's most important

defender because of that defender's fame in his own city. Taylor-Ide asks how easy it

might be for someone to bring the darkness to civilization; the text shows that it is quite

easy for Stapleton to invade London. The text also leaves open the suggestion that, though Stapleton is defeated, it would not be hard at all for another menace to similarly invade the city. It would appear that Holmes's defensive work is never done.

A second question, just as disturbing as the first, must also be asked: how much trust can a disciplined society place in a free agent like Holmes? He outmaneuvers the villain by mastering the villain's own techniques, those of cultural detachment, disguise, strategic mobility, the infiltration and command of physical space. To some degree at least, Holmes and Stapleton share the same techniques, the same liminal space, the same combative tendencies. As Christopher Clausen asks:

> [W]hat kind of social order is presupposed by [Holmes's] very existence as a free-lance 'highest court of appeal' – a court to whom his clients frequently appeal against the mistaken judgments of officialdom? How conservative, at bottom, is a series of books whose protagonist so often flouts both the police and the law in his determination to see justice – the defining of which he takes to be his own individual prerogative – is finally done? (75-76).

Holmes exploits the seemingly safe spaces of the city for his own secret and combative ends, just as the villain does; he subverts the normal course of disciplinary policing by avoiding observation, just as the villain does. Granted, he does so, as Clausen suggests, in pursuit of his own conception of justice. But a disciplined society must ask, what if Holmes's sense of justice fails to align with what the disciplinary regime considers just? And what might stop someone like Holmes from advancing, for his own ends, a rather more villainous agenda? This novel, for all the comfort it might give a reader when

Stapleton is finally defeated, does not answer those questions, adding of course to the Gothic impact of the story and the cultural anxiety inherent to its depiction of the detective and the Victorian city.

Taken with other popular works of this time (by Stevenson, Stoker, Hornung, and Buchan, among others), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* functions as a multi-faceted dialogic revelation: that the city of London is full of nested, hidden spaces; that those spaces can and do serve as ideal loci of hidden contest; that the villains who occupy and move through those spaces carry with them the ingenuity to evade official detection and the menace to do the city great harm; that, at a fundamental level below the threshold of disciplinary visibility, the city itself might be defended only by those who can operate (as do the criminals) in those unseen realms; that the barrier between civilization and barbarism is thin indeed (as Buchan writes); and that the victory of the defenders of civilization is not an definitive victory but is rather a single instance of containment of the plague that threatens to permeate any one of the city's multiform points of ingress. The reader must not conclude that someone like Holmes will always defeat the villain, always take the honourable road, always save the city from the forces that threaten it. The reader must only conclude that Holmes defeats the villain and saves the city *this time*, and that he does so by tainting himself with exposure to the primitive force and criminal threat he combats. Holmes becomes in this sense the perfect defender of the thresholds within and between the two connected places of London and Dartmoor because he fully embodies the heroic and villainous potential intrinsic to both places.

CHAPTER 3

Hornung's Code-Switching Monster: Threatening Ambiguity and Liminoid Mobility in
Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman

From the first publication of E.W. Hornung's *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*,

critics have focused almost exclusively on the criminality of the "gentleman thief"

Raffles. There are at least two other facets of his character, however, that deserve

scholarly consideration: the complexity of his status as a liminoid mover, and the Gothic

effect of the manner in which he easily slides between several competing cultural codes

of behavior. First, concerning Raffles's liminoid status: Raffles is an habitual thief, a

man who routinely removes himself from the visible forces of discipline and creates for

himself a separate (liminal) space in which to commit his crimes. He does this by

infiltrating thresholds and then moving in secret beyond those otherwise guarded points

of access. During his criminal endeavors, to put it another way, he willfully enters and

temporarily occupies a liminal space of his own construction. Raffles's time in this

constructed space can be understood through an application of Turner and van Gennep's

theories of liminality, particularly their notion that the initiate who enters the liminal

space and then re-emerges must necessarily be transformed by the liminal experience.

When Raffles emerges with Bunny from their first criminal excursion together, the Bond

Street jewellery theft, he is shown no longer to be the simple gentleman cricketer he

appeared to be. He is now revealed as a gentleman thief, a cricketer and burglar, a

seemingly rich man motivated by the threat of poverty and scandal, a respectable member of society and yet a criminal.

Second, regarding the Gothic impact of Raffles's character: scholars have yet to discuss Raffles as a Gothic villain, and yet his ambiguous identity renders him, according to Fred Botting's description of the Gothic, a prototypical embodiment of 19th-century Gothic ideology. Botting argues that Victorian Gothic subjects "were divided products of both reason and desire, subjects of obsession, narcissism and self-gratification as much as reasonable, responsible codes of behavior" (12). Any of these descriptors might be applied to Raffles; at times he adheres to the "responsible" code of gentlemanly behavior, and yet at other times he's driven both by narcissism and self-gratification to commit his daring acts of thievery. Botting, in reference to Jekyll and Hyde, suggests that the doubling of identity in Stevenson's novel "discloses the ambivalence of identity and the instability of the social, moral, and scientific codes that manufacture distinctions" (141). If this disclosure of ambivalence and cultural instability is revealed through the duality in Jekyll/Hyde, it even more deeply explored in the multiplicity of Raffles's character. His actions in the text represent more than just a doubling of character, more than just the troubling instability that arises when a respectable doctor and a heinous murderer occupy the same body. In Jeffrey Cohen's terms, Raffles is a monster, a "disturbing hybrid" whose cultural multiplicity makes it impossible to include him in any "systematic structuration" and thus renders him a "harbinger of category crisis" (6). At any given time, Raffles embodies and yet slides between any number of cultural codes of behavior, many of which would normally be seen as mutually exclusive, thus defying all attempts to classify him.

With this potentially monstrous criminal-cricketer-gentleman multiplicity established early in *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*, Hornung positions Raffles as a Gothic villain on par in complexity with the doctor-gentleman-murderer Dr. Jekyll and the gentleman-aesthete-debaucher Dorian Gray. All three characters defy visual classification; all three inhabit foggy urban spaces that resonate with unseen crime and concealed liminal contests. The challenge here for Hornung's readers, as for those who read Stevenson and Wilde, is to classify and define this character Raffles who seems to defy classification and definition. Once Raffles has proved his ability to enter the liminal space of contest and then to re-emerge – to manipulate the visible/invisible matrix governed implicitly by cultural discipline (as Foucault would have it) and explicitly by visible disciplinary agents – his cultural designation seems to be essentially up for grabs.

Raffles is at various times a criminal and a gentleman, as I've said, as well as a cricketer and a public school man, but as the stories unfold, he often overlaps or blends these ethical and motivational positions, these cultural codes, to suit whatever situation he encounters. As I will show in the rest of this chapter, Turner's argument that those who enter the liminal space become by definition ambiguous is taken to a Gothic extreme through a series of situational, coded contrasts illustrated in Hornung's Raffles stories. Taken together, Raffles's various codes – their contradictions and interplay, their fluidity and idiosyncrasy – form the multifaceted cornerstone of his most important characteristic: his threatening (read: Gothic) cultural ambiguity as a gentleman-thief and the epistemological uncertainty he therefore creates. There's a great degree of urban anxiety embedded in the notion that no one is knowable and that visual forms of classification, for good or ill, are nearly always reductive. The sight-based forces of

discipline – those official and unofficial forces that judge and classify by external appearance – one might conclude, are necessarily doomed to fail, as they both fail to classify Raffles or to confine him.

Late-Victorian and Edwardian criticism set the precedent for most of the surprisingly simplistic criticism surrounding Hornung's most accomplished literary creation. In his autobiography *Memories and Adventures*, Hornung's brother-in-law Sir Arthur Conan Doyle compliments Hornung's literary style but critiques the moral platform of the Raffles stories:

> I think I may claim that his famous character Raffles was a kind of inversion of Sherlock Holmes, Bunny playing Watson. He admits as much in his kindly dedication[11]. I think there are few finer examples of short-story writing in our language than these, though I confess I think they are rather dangerous in their suggestion. I told him so before he put pen to paper, and the result has, I fear, borne me out. You must not make the criminal a hero. (252-53)

Other early readers fixated similarly on the criminality explored in the Raffles stories. Patricia O'Connor, writing in the *New York Times Book Review* in 1986, quotes a contemporary *NYT* review of Hornung's first collection from 1899: "'One reads what Mr. Hornung has written with a kind of fascination such as the serpent is credited with exercising" (np). Another Victorian reviewer referred to the Raffles stories as parts of "a

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[11] Hornung dedicated his first collection, *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*, to Doyle with these words:

"To ACD
This Form of Flattery."

school of literature that cannot possibly elevate the human race, or even interest persons of average good taste" ("Reviews" 110). And a third echoed these sentiments, describing *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* as a "perversely ingenious story" and "clever indeed, but exasperating" because of its seemingly amoral message and, perhaps more damning, its unrealistic portrayal of the criminal: "Mr. Hornung's hero is a thief, yet is he made the superior in wit, skill, patience, resolve, and self-control of all his honest victims and all guardians of the law. We cannot think this true to psychological fact, and feel that even in trifles like this, meant only for passing amusement, it is unwise to toy with moral standards and trifle with eternal social verities" ("Notes" 255-56). We can hear in this quote a note of fear (packaged as denial) of the Gothic potential of a villain who appears to act more respectably and more intelligently than his honest victims do. There is in such subversion a terrifying dissolution of cultural categories that, in the eyes of the reviewer, must be quickly dismissed as unrealistic. Clearly Raffles's criminality, and more importantly the seeming celebration of that criminality because of his position as the protagonist and even hero in Hornung's stories, made Raffles's character less than appealing to some Victorian readers.

The discomfort caused by Raffles's criminal endeavors may be attributed to more than what Peter Haining refers to as the "tight-lipped morality of late Victorian and early Edwardian days" that "could seemingly not permit such a rascal as Raffles to be widely disseminated" (16), though of course the period is noted, perhaps unfairly, for such moral leanings. We can also surmise that Raffles made his contemporary readers uncomfortable because of the manner in which he challenged certain cherished cultural beliefs, particularly the beliefs surrounding Raffles's status as a gentleman. Robin

Gilmour writes that Victorians understood the notion of the gentleman as "a cultural goal, a mirror of desirable moral and social values" (1). This goal and these values were necessarily vague, leading to some uncertainty as to what a true gentleman was and who might qualify. Undergirding the ambivalence, though, was, as Gilmour describes it, "the universal assumption that gentlemanliness was important and that its importance transcended rank because it was a moral and not just a social category" (3). Ina Ferris makes a similar argument, suggesting that whereas 18th-century gentlemen were expected to devote themselves to "public virtue," which she defines as the broader public or social good, Victorian gentlemen were more interested in private, relational virtues. The cultural authority of the Victorian gentleman, says Ferris, "depended on the moral notion of his personal conduct" (408) rather than his social activity or public respectability. In both of these descriptions, Gilmour and Ferris draw a distinction between "moral" and "social," implying that what might be considered right or proper according to one code might not be right or proper in the other. We can see in Raffles's actions that divergence in codes, an active distinction between the moral and the social, or perhaps more precisely, the moral (as Raffles defines it) and the legal. Given the moral high ground assumed to be covered by one wearing the mantle "gentleman," we can surmise that if ever a conflict arose about which code should be followed, the Victorian gentleman must necessarily choose the moral (as the higher good) over the social. It would stretch Victorian sentiments, however, to consider the stealing of another's possessions to be a moral act. One of the most dynamic facets of Raffles's character, then, is the manner in which he defines what is moral and what is not. For him morality and decorum seem much more aligned than a more conventional sense of right vs. wrong might suggest. In

his economy of values, as we shall see, it is often morally acceptable to rob someone even if it is socially unacceptable.

Raffles's gentlemanliness is still more threatening, though, when one considers his public school background and the gentility of his manners while committing his crimes. J.R. de S. Honey argues that "the function of the Victorian public school system by the end of the century was to produce *manly gentlemen*, the concept of 'gentleman' having changed from that of a blend of patrician manners and classical education to that of a person who exhibits all the hallmarks of having been through a certain rigorous educational process in common with certain other persons" (22-23; original emphasis). De S. Honey's contention here raises an important point in regard to Raffles: not only has he completed his public school education, but he has also undergone a rigorous educational process as he has taught himself the ways of the burglar, even as he now (in the collection of stories that forms the basis of this study) puts Bunny through a similar process. De S. Honey's definition of the gentleman also suggests that as Raffles and Bunny have endured a rigorous educational process to learn crime, they might be considered, in a sense, gentlemen of crime. Far from the conventional "patrician manners" and "classical education" model of gentlemanliness, this new view of gentility threatens to blast clean away older, perhaps more conservative notions of this elevated cultural status. And what's more disturbing: Raffles and Bunny both have also undergone the more conventional public school education. That is, they also act with patrician manners and exhibit the telltale signs of classical education. They are by old and new definitions gentlemen, and they commit crimes. They embody a revolutionary cultural position that brings together two codes of conduct thought to be mutually

exclusive. Or, to put it in Cohen's terms: they represent a distinct category crisis. They threaten by their actions to make a monstrosity of the notion of the gentleman.

It is his complicated negotiation of codes, and more importantly the degree to which Raffles embodies two codes – the gentleman's and the criminal's – assumed to be mutually exclusive, that makes Raffles such a dynamic character. As George Orwell argues, "[T]he truly dramatic thing about Raffles, the thing that makes him a sort of by-word even to this day […] is the fact that he is a *gentleman*." Orwell writes that had Raffles been "a plumber or a greengrocer who was really a burglar," the stories would have lacked "anything inherently dramatic," though he concedes that "the theme of the 'double life,' of respectability covering crime" would still be present. For Orwell, Raffles is most compelling because he is presented "not as an honest man who has gone astray, but as a public-school man who has gone astray" and a "West End clubman who is really a burglar" (233). From this angle, all other discussion of Raffles's character must rest on the "truly dramatic" point that Raffles understands the cultural status and moral quality coded in his outward appearance as a gentleman and that he uses that coding for his own benefit. He uses it most threateningly to evade the discipline of a society fundamentally opposed to his nocturnal endeavors. He shows himself not to have fully assimilated the legal code needed for him to police himself; he shows himself capable also of evading the police forces deployed to counter those who cannot police themselves. When he seeks to move freely, he ironically lets himself be seen, but only in the guise of a West End clubman that he knows will make the disciplinary watchers turn their eyes elsewhere. And perhaps most importantly, in doing these things he challenges

conventional assumptions about what types of conduct a gentleman's life might include. His criminality represents a possible degeneration of the standards of gentility.

Though Raffles has received much less scholarly attention[12] than his fictional contemporaries Dr. Jekyll or Dorian Gray, he nevertheless embodies much of the Gothic ambiguity at play in the fiction of this period. I would argue, actually, that of these three, Raffles carries the most potential for Gothic cultural impact because of his realism; without the use of mystical pseudo-science or magical art, Raffles manages to wreak havoc for a time in London with only the benefit of his own reputation, his gentlemanly appearance, and his criminal cunning for protection. His multiplicity cannot be explained away by science or magic; without those mitigating fictional factors, Raffles represents the potential inaccuracy of visual social classification as well as the failure of visual systems of discipline to stop someone intent on subverting the system from within. He is the least fantastic of the late-Victorian dualistic protagonists, and thus potentially the most impactful. He is also the most relatable and seemingly accessible of these culturally ambiguous creations. Whereas Dr. Jekyll is some unspecified type of physician who lives on an unnamed street in central London, and whereas Dorian Gray is essentially a gentleman of leisure who lives somewhere in or near Mayfair, Raffles's readers are told early in his stories that he is an accomplished cricketer, a successful slow-bowler both for Middlesex and for the Gentleman of England, and a resident of the prestigious Albany near Piccadilly. We learn these details of Raffles life within the first few pages of "The

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[12] As a point of comparison: an MLA Bibliography search of the term "Raffles" yields 18 results. A search for "Jekyll and Hyde" yields 239; a search for "Dorian Gray" yields 384.

Ides of March," the first story in *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*, and thus we are introduced to the various cultural codes – those of gentleman, public school man, cricketer, and also thief – by which Raffles is rendered familiar to his readers.

Linguists use the term "code-switching" to represent the "switches that are at play between speakers who have mastered two linguistic systems and who are able to communicate rapidly and effortlessly from one linguistic system to another as circumstances change within an interaction." The concept of code-switching provides a useful means to study such complex communication because the speakers in such interactions "exhibit their ability to switch back and forth between the two languages to the extent that it is not always possible to determine which of them operates as a dominant code and which serves to embed the content" (Jan 41-42). Code-switching seems a useful way to think about Raffles, though of course he does not literally switch languages in the midst of any interaction. He does, however, rather fluidly switch cultural codes[13]; he sometimes acts as a gentleman, sometimes as a sportsman, sometimes as a boys' school chum, sometimes as an adherent to the legal/moral framework most valued by his culture, sometimes as an amateur cracksman. Just as spoken languages provide a way for each of us to make sense of the world, and also to a certain degree the

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[13] Of course to some extent all Victorians changed codes; one might be a husband and father as well as a shopkeeper and Anglican and thus uphold the particular codes of behaviour attached to each position. My argument here is that Raffles switches between codes that cover a broader range of possible social positions: from gentleman to criminal, he moves from the most respectable to the least. Whereas a Victorian man might occupy the categories of husband-father-shopkeeper-Anglican without seeming to contradict any social or cultural norms, Raffles occupies categories that would seem conflicting to a Victorian audience. Hence his menace.

way the world makes sense of each of us (our native language goes a long way toward classifying our cultural identities), so these codes are the way Raffles negotiates his ambiguous place in his culture as well as the way in which his culture tries (and fails) to make sense of him.

Raffles manages, therefore, to controvert conventional methods of cultural discipline – visible and implied, police and Panopticon – by the manner in which he employs and partially undermines the various and sometimes competing cultural codes at his disposal. His gentlemanly appearance serves not as only an emblem of wealth and moral uprightness, but also as a means, because of the *visual perception* of wealth and moral uprightness, to infiltrate space and commit felonious burglary. His prowess and fame as a cricketer provide him with the cultural exposure he needs to disseminate that gentlemanly image as well as the strategic insight to pursue with sportsmanlike fervor his chosen criminal "game" of thievery. His public school identity provides additional cultural capital and forges connections for him, most importantly with Bunny, that further facilitate his covert criminal operations. His constructed outward image does not so much reflect his inner character as protect it or, more precisely, the criminal part of it. Like Dorian Gray, he allows himself to be seen in society often enough and openly enough to deflect suspicion about the activities he undertakes during those other moments when he chooses to evade that same social gaze. And yet even his status as a criminal is complicated; he endeavors to perfect a rather elegant and artistic form of criminality, choosing not to engage in violence (for the most part), not to steal from his host (though other guests are fair game), and not to steal exclusively for financial gain (unless money is so tight that artfulness in his criminal technique becomes an unaffordable luxury). He

upholds most of the behavioral standards expected of a gentleman even while he commits

serial theft. He is a criminal, as contemporary critics were quick to point out, but not a

common one.

The concept of cultural ambiguity works as a synthesis between the Gothic, the

liminal, and the surveillance of the disciplinary state. This ambiguity forms a crucial part

of the anxiety engendered by these late-Victorian Gothic texts, and perhaps reflected in

those texts, especially as that ambiguity is manifested in the inability of the observer to

categorize the observed. A primary purpose of a disciplinary system is to mitigate the

blending of position and identity; as long as those under this system of discipline perceive

that they might in fact be under observation, they will feel compelled to stay in their

places and maintain their visible knowability. As D.A. Miller puts it, a society built on

surveillance becomes "a regime of the norm, in which normalizing perceptions,

prescriptions, and sanctions are diffused in discourses and practices throughout the social

fabric" (viii). The trouble arises for this disciplinary system, of course, when those under

observation are free to move and, because of the nature of the space they occupy, to mask

whatever visible markers serve to classify them. Late-Victorian London, with its nested

spaces, its multiform thresholds, its labyrinthine streets and alleys, accommodates just

such secret movement and thus the infiltration by skillful movers of spaces not usually

open to them in the normative regime. Those who move have the potential to avoid

public and even private surveillance by changing the contextual backdrop by which they

are categorized and thus, in effect, by changing their visible aspects. Or, to put it another

way, they change their definable visible dynamics in essence by switching the cultural

codes they use to determine their course of action. They may employ disguise, thus

blending their original identity with another; they may leave one disciplinary grid in order to answer the dictates of another; perhaps most frighteningly, they may use their deceptively categorical outer guises to shield their innermost, invisible beings. Like Raffles, a liminoid mover in this third instance *might dress as himself*, a respectable and acceptable gentleman, in order to disguise his secret criminality. This is liminoid mobility at its most ambiguous.

When movers like Raffles and his trusted sidekick Bunny evade the state's more aggressive visible agents (i.e. the police) and essentially disappear from the disciplinary grid, which they do repeatedly in Hornung's stories, those movers enter (according to Victor Turner's definition) a period of liminality. Because they have entered this period through an act of their own design, rather than through a ritual act done in service to a cultural mandate, they technically become liminoid movers[14]. With liminoid movement comes the potential for all manner of anti-social behavior, though I would argue that such potential is not quite as simple as Turner's terms might imply. Turner writes in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, "In this gap between ordered worlds almost anything can happen" (13). He further summarizes both the purpose of disciplinary surveillance and the danger inherent to those who remove themselves from its power:

> In this interim of "liminality," the possibility exists of standing aside not
> only from one's own social position but from all social positions and of
> formulating a potentially unlimited series of alternative social
> arrangements. That this danger is recognized in all tolerably orderly

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[14] I discuss the distinction between liminal and liminoid in Chapter 1.

societies is made evident by the proliferation of taboos that hedge in and

constrain those on whom the normative structure loses its grip. (13-14)

This assertion of standing aside from "all social positions" seems to run counter to the

notion (given the insidiousness of normative influence) that one is always subject to some

form of social control. And yet, although in this passage Turner seems to postulate the

liminal as a realm beyond or outside of social bounds, that liminal space is not realmless

– it's not a place without a structure of its own. Evidence of the presence of structure

within liminality can be found in Turner's own notion of *communitas*, a specific sort of

bond that forms between those like Raffles and Bunny who share the liminal space.

Communitas ignores issues of class and other social strata; it stresses "equality and

comradeship as norms," Turner writes (DFM 232). It ignores all distinctions made by the

pre-ritual culture – and that is its culture. That's how it works in that realm, as we see in

the bond between Hornung's main characters. Even for Turner, there really is no escape

from some sort of structural grid; one leaves one grid (everyday society) and enters

another (the liminal), each with its own practices and processes and protocols. There is

considerable ambiguity attached to those who move between disciplinary systems, to

those who shift codes and thus at least partially evade the normative structures of any one

realm, to those who might find in such shifting the means to avoid a singular disciplinary

gaze.

       This theoretical menace, and more importantly the cultural ambiguity associated

with those who choose temporarily to evade the gaze of cultural discipline, relates

directly to the main characters in Hornung's stories. Quite simply, when Raffles and

Bunny go somewhere they are not supposed to go, or when they go somewhere for a

reason other than the culturally sanctioned reason that might be supposed, they cease to be what they appear to be. Gentlemen have no business, for example, breaking into a Bond Street jeweller's shop at 2:00 in the morning, as Raffles and Bunny do in the "The Ides of March"; ergo, those who are breaking into that shop are not gentlemen. And yet they are, unmistakably. They act as gentlemen even as they commit a crime. This is an epistemological problem, or as Cohen would have it, a category crisis: how can we classify these characters? The text doesn't answer the question. It merely poses it and re-poses it in differing circumstances.

My purpose in this chapter, then, will be to explore that ambiguous nature, to delve into the visual and epistemological crisis created by Raffles, a character who uses his respectable outward coding to shield from view the criminal activities he pursues. Hornung's text does much more than present a good guy/bad guy dichotomy concerning both Raffles and Bunny; Raffles in particular cannot be so easily categorized. He's a liminoid criminal, yes, but Hornung takes great pains to show us that he also employs the coded behaviour of a gentleman, a sportsman, and a cricketer. He's not nearly as depraved as some criminals – that is, he does not adhere to the criminal code as relentlessly as some – and he's even nostalgic for his more innocent, pre-criminal past, a seemingly incongruent emotional current for character who takes such pleasure in his commission of crime. While it would be easy to say that one who fails to follow the legal codes of a disciplinary state should be considered culturally diminished or necessarily evil, the stories in *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* illustrate a more frightening principle (because even the good/evil binary is comforting due to the classificational clarity it affords): that those who seem to be on the disciplinary grid might be off it or, more

frighteningly, might straddle the boundary between grids; that those who are off it might also be gentleman; that those who appear to be respectable might not always be; that those who appear to be despicable might not always be.

Raffles: The Liminoid Mover

The foundation of Raffles's liminoid status, his ambiguous cultural status, and the Gothic potential he carries with him through Victorian London, is the manner in which he defies visual categorization and shirks the cultural codes that would define him. When in public, and therefore more open to his culture's disciplinary gaze, he appears to be the most respectable of gentlemen, and yet his readers know that he is a thief. When the disciplinary gaze is directed elsewhere and Bunny's narrative reveals to us Raffles's criminal side, Raffles frequently appears to conduct his criminal business with the ethics and artistry more easily associated with a gentleman than with a common thief. He seems in these artistic moments to be the perfectly disciplined subject, taking his public school training and genteel manners with him (as though he has internalized them) even as he enters the criminal realm beyond the disciplinary gaze of his structured society. That is, he's a thief when he appears to be a perfect gentleman and a perfect gentleman when he acts as a thief. The simple term "gentleman-thief" commonly attributed to him, however, fails to capture the ambiguity of his character; he would be more rightly called a shape-shifter (without the sci-fi/fantasy connotations that term carries), or rather a code-shifter, a man whose nebulous identity moves toward the opposite of whatever guise he assumes. He is, in the fiction of this period, the prototypical liminoid mover, the prototype for those who defy all visual systems of classification and discipline.

The agency by which Raffles enacts this self-removal from his "normal" sphere of operations – in this case, his status as gentleman – facilitates his rejection of the several codes at work upon him. By moving between disciplinary grids, in a manner of speaking – the legal grid, in which theft would be forbidden; the public school grid, in which loyalty and refinement and perhaps "manliness" are paramount; the cricketer's grid, with its emphasis on fair play; the sportsman's grid, in which courage and adventure are privileged, and so on – he takes with him all possibility that he will necessarily be restrained by a single external code of behaviour. In the terms I've chosen to employ in this project, Raffles's agency renders him a liminoid mover, a man who chooses of his own volition to temporarily set aside his cultural position and to move into and through spaces he would not otherwise be authorized to occupy. "The Ides of March," the first story in *The Amateur Cracksman*, establishes quite clearly the liminoid positions Raffles and Bunny choose to create for themselves. The structure of this story follows perfectly Turner's description in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* of the three-stage process of *rites de passage* as first conceived by Arnold van Gennep. Turner explains that these rites

> are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen – the Latin for threshold, signifying the great importance of symbolic thresholds at this middle period of the rites, through cunicular, "being in a tunnel" would better describe the quality of this phase in many cases, its hidden nature, its sometimes mysterious darkness), and reaggregation. (231-32; original parentheses)

Writing decades before Turner or van Gennep, Hornung seems to have understood in general terms this liminal process and to have built his first Raffles story according to

these three steps. He seems to have understood, too, the transformational nature of this process as well as the degree to which this process calls into play the various codes that might define an individual at a given moment in a given place. We see in this first story, therefore, the development of both Raffles and Bunny as liminoid movers who embrace the cultural transformation and thus the ambiguity that comes from their suddenly transient social status.

The first stage of the liminoid process, according to Turner and van Gennep, involves an act of separation. In "The Ides of March," it is actually Bunny who undergoes this initial stage of the process, separating himself as he does from the moral and ethical protocols that have thus far dictated his life as a gentleman; Raffles has already become a liminoid mover and now serves to initiate the novice Bunny. As he provides a stand-in for readers, Bunny's epistemological shift seems emblematic of the cultural critique Hornung offers here – he undermines the validity of Raffles's externally respectable cultural codes by allowing Bunny (and, vicariously, his readers) to see through them. And by witnessing the process by which Bunny shifts codes, we as readers enter a realm we might not otherwise have seen, and a realm the other characters in these stories certainly have not explored. Those in the stories who still consider Raffles an unsullied gentleman have never gone through the initiation Bunny and the readers go through in this first story. Bunny is transformed from a gentleman to a thief, of course, but more importantly he is transformed from someone who takes Raffles's cultural codes for granted into a man who sees through such coding.

Bunny's initial approach to Raffles in this first story illustrates the degree to which Bunny – and, again, the readers Bunny represents – took Raffles's outwardly-

determined cultural codes for granted. As the story opens, Bunny returns to Raffles's

rooms in the Albany, the place in which earlier that evening Raffles had hosted the

baccarat game that cost Bunny more money than he had to his name. He returns to beg

for Raffles's help. Raffles expresses his surprise at Bunny's financial straits: "But

somebody told me you were so well off. I heard you had come in for money?" (2).

Bunny concedes that he did indeed inherit some money, but in the past three years he's

squandered all of it. Despite outward appearances and his reputed net worth, Bunny

clearly deserved no place at the baccarat table that night in the prestigious Albany.

What Bunny does not know until this desperate moment, because he makes an

understandable assumption that the seemingly wealthy gentleman before him actually has

money, is that Raffles himself is just as broke as Bunny. "Did I refuse to believe it of

you?" Raffles asks as Bunny expresses his disbelief in Raffles's confessed financial

difficulties (6). Raffles then sums up what must be a shock both to Bunny and to his

readers; he undermines a commonly held conclusion of those who have judged him

externally as a gentleman:

> And, with your own experience, do you think that because a fellow has
>
> rooms in this place, and belongs to a club or two, and plays a little cricket,
>
> he must necessarily have a balance at the bank? I tell you, my dear man,
>
> that at this moment I'm as hard up as you ever were. I have nothing but
>
> my wits to live on – absolutely nothing else. It was as necessary for me to
>
> win some money this evening [at the baccarat table] as it was for you.
>
> We're in the same boat, Bunny; we'd better pull together. (6)

In this passage Raffles neatly summarizes the external circumstances that qualify him as a gentleman, those factors that lead Bunny to assume that Raffles's life matches in substance these external trappings of the gentleman. And then he just as neatly dispels that assumption. Here are two gentlemen, then, who despite the cultural stations coded into their outward appearances in reality face the bleak promise of the social disgrace that comes with indebtedness and poverty. Bunny carries a pistol in his jacket that night and promises to kill himself if Raffles cannot save him. Raffles, meanwhile, plots the robbery of a jewellery store on Bond Street in order to provide himself with the money he needs to live on. The culturally valued trappings of wealth thus hide the very real desperation, the outwardly unbelievable difficulties, of these two men.

In this text, then, the prerequisite for cultural liminoid ambiguity is the state of having nothing to lose (except, perhaps, for one's reputation), which once again would seem unlikely for Bunny and for Raffles. And yet we learn in "The Ides of March" that Bunny has absolutely no money, no family, and no means by which he can pay off his debts. We learn further that he has written cheques on an already overdrawn bank account; these cheques were written to pay off, or rather to appear to pay off, his gambling debts. When these cheques are cashed the next day, Bunny's poverty will become evident and his social reputation will be destroyed. As he re-enters Raffles's rooms at 12:30 that first night, he literally has mere hours before the façade of his comfortable life is exposed as a sham. In a sense, Bunny already leads a double-life – he's a seemingly respectable gentleman who writes bad cheques. He sees in Raffles's proposal for thievery, though, a different code of behaviour, presumably a more gentlemanly one.   Writing bad checks is a crime, as is burglary. The first causes a

scandal because you can't do it secretly – eventually your bad checks will bounce. Burglary, however, is a concealable offense if it's done with courage and artistry. Still, as a gentleman with thoughts of respectability, Bunny faces a tough decision between these two scandalous alternatives. When he draws his pistol and points it at his own head in Raffles's presence, therefore, we can assume (as Raffles does) that Bunny's gesture is sincere. He literally has nothing to lose, at least in his own estimation, by throwing his life away.

In this moment, Bunny proves himself worthy of the separation from conventional codes of behavior required for this liminoid undertaking: he shows himself to be bold, courageous, and unspeakably desperate to find a new code of conduct to follow. Bunny has evidently passed through some sort of initiation; he has separated himself from all he once knew, even to the point of suicide, and in doing so wins all the companionship and financial (though criminal) assistance Raffles can offer. Raffles's reaction to Bunny's threatened suicide, however, is not what Bunny expects. Rather than horror or repulsion, Raffles expresses admiration and a sense of connection with the desperate man: "I never dreamt you had such stuff in you, Bunny! No, I'm hanged if I let you go now" (4). Bunny's utter hopelessness forges between the two men a common bond of desperation and separation, both necessarily qualities for the liminoid criminal activities to follow. They have taken the first of Turner's three steps through the liminal process.

Turner's description of the middle phase of transformational process is especially illuminating when trying to understand the cultural dynamics surrounding the criminal endeavors Raffles and Bunny undertake. "During the intervening liminal period," Turner writes, "the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger," or "liminar") become ambiguous,

neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification; he passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of his past or coming state" (232). Even in the first few steps of the second phase of their liminoid endeavor, when they first leave the Albany and head for Bond Street, we can see this ambiguity at play in these characters. Bunny describes the scene:

> Piccadilly was a trench of raw white fog, rimmed with blurred street-lamps, and lined with a thin coating of adhesive mud. We met no other wayfarers on the deserted flagstones, and were ourselves favoured with a very hard stare from the constable of the beat, who, however, touched his helmet on recognising my companion. "You see, I'm known to the police," laughed Raffles as we passed on. "Poor devils, they've got to keep their weather eye open on a night like this! A fog may be a bore to you and me, Bunny, but it's a perfect godsend to the criminal classes."
> (10)

Raffles and Bunny drift through the fog and blurred gaslights on an otherwise deserted London street. They arouse suspicion from the local policeman – anyone out at this time of night in these conditions must be up to something nefarious – until the constable recognizes the famous gentleman Raffles, at which point the suspicion drifts away. The two are visually judged to be gentlemen, one of them famous, and thus not a threat to disciplinary society. And yet, they move down the street, essentially hiding in plain sight, toward the commission of a crime. They embody in this moment Turner's notion of ambiguity – they are not what they appear in this moment to be.

The nature of this first crime perfectly captures the description Turner offers for this middle off-the-grid stage: he describes it as "limen – the Latin for threshold, signifying the great importance of symbolic thresholds at this middle period of the rites." He also emphasizes the atmosphere sometimes present in this middle stage by referring to "its hidden nature, its sometimes mysterious darkness" (*DFM*, 232). Once he and Raffles enter the premises in Bond Street, Bunny describes the darkness through which they groped their way upstairs, the damp wall and dusty banisters they use to feel their way ahead, the sudden match-strike Raffles uses to illuminate the upstairs hallway of the pitch-black house. A few moments later, the men descend the dark steps and then descend again down some narrow stone steps to the basement of the premises. It is here that Raffles has determined to "make a connection" (14) between the residence above and the jewellery shop below; he plans, in other words, to create a threshold that will allow them to move from one space to another. The scene that now confronts Bunny is a warren of nested spaces full of thresholds, the markings of a true liminal endeavor. "We were now considerably below the level of the street," he says, "in a small space with as many doors as it had sides. Three were ajar, and we saw through them into empty cellars; but in the fourth a key was turned and a bolt was drawn; and this one presently let us out into the bottom of deep, square well of fog" (15). Until this moment, Bunny has yet to see Raffles do more than walk up and down a dark staircase. Now, however, Raffles reveals himself as one who, with "the tools of his secret trade" (15), has crossed a hidden threshold and made himself master of this liminal space. "Door number one," Raffles whispers as he crosses this first threshold. "Deuce knows how many more

there'll be, but I know of two at least. We won't have to make much noise over them, either; down here there's less risk" (15).

Bunny has a complicated reaction during this middle phase of the liminal process as the reality of their criminal activity sinks in. He struggles to assimilate the new code of criminal conduct with his prior gentlemanly and legal codes. Though he frequently admits a sense of foreboding and uncertainty during the early stages of the robbery, he admits that he entered into their "nefarious undertaking with an involuntary zeal" and that he was "spellbound and entranced" by the romance of it all. He also observes that his "moral sense and my sense of fear were stricken by a common paralysis," a condition he finds surprising (16). The excitement, the thrill, of the secret liminoid activity of breaking and entering, and of thus discovering new codes of conduct to follow, new metaphorical and literal thresholds to cross, overrides Bunny's otherwise conventional senses of fear and moral repugnance. His short time in the liminal space has already begun the definitional transformation in Bunny's character.

Bunny further embraces his increasingly ambivalent moral position as he assumes a place of secret vigilance and watches the street outside for signs of the police or watchmen, those visible forces of disciplinary society. He explains that "there was something very stimulating in the vital responsibility" of his observational position because his role in the crime becomes more active while his previous moral platform becomes increasingly foreign to him: "Now I was to take part in the game. And the fresh excitement made me more than ever insensible to those considerations of conscience and of safety which were already as dead nerves in my breast" (17). We should note here that Bunny uses the word "responsibility," a crucial word in a Victorian gentleman's self-

definition as it articulates so much of what makes a man a true gentleman. And yet his moral decline in this moment – essentially his rejection of the legal code taken for granted by a proper civilized gentleman, as Gilmour would have it – enhances the rather titillating and frightening dynamic already at play in this first story, especially because Bunny explains the appeal of this criminal endeavor as a form of "excitement." A reader must now see not only that one who appears to be a gentleman may not adhere to gentlemanly codes of legal conduct (i.e. he might be ambiguous in a manner unmatched by his external comportment), but also that the gentleman in question might undertake such nefarious hidden action because, acting in such moments as a sportsman, he finds it thrilling and pleasurable to do so. These ambiguous gentlemen are not only engaged in secret crime, in other words, but also seem to derive a rather scandalous personal enjoyment from that crime. In this moment they straddle the border between the moral and cultural uprightness implied by their external appearance and the depravity implied by their criminal actions. They become, in Cohen's terms, monstrous, occupying as they do the border between two seemingly incompatible cultural positions. They have transformed themselves, temporarily, from gentlemen in possession of respectable social standing into liminoid thieves (though genteel and sporting thieves, certainly) in possession of stolen goods.

For Bunny, however, this taint on his soul is not temporary but permanent, a burden he carries with him into the third phase of the liminal process – the reaggregation into his former sphere of activity. As he and Raffles leave the shop with their stolen jewels, Bunny constructs for himself a very simple train of logic by which he laments his new identity: "Raffles was a burglar. I had helped to commit one burglary, therefore I

was a burglar too" (19). As simple as that, he labels himself as a criminal. Victor Turner

describes all liminal and liminoid endeavors as necessarily temporary; by definition,

liminal spaces are transient spaces of transformation to be occupied only until the

transformation is complete. However, what Turner does not mention, because his focus

remains on the tribal cultures for which these *rites de passage* only happen once in a

lifetime, is that a liminoid who has shown himself to be capable of liminal movement

forever retains the *potential* to re-enter the liminal state. Bunny in this pivotal moment

concludes that once one has successfully committed a burglary, both the cultural stain

absorbed and the criminal experience gained become a permanent part of his identity.

This is the transformation to which Turner refers; Bunny has completed the rite of

passage into burglarhood and can't see his way back to what he would have considered

his former normalcy. There is, for Bunny and undoubtedly for the readers he represents,

a lasting social stigma attached to this status. Just as contested liminal space forever

holds the status of once having served as the setting for liminal battle (as with Dartmoor,

for example, as I argued in Chapter 1), so does the person who enters the liminal sphere

forever carry the badge and the inherent potential menace of having once left the

disciplinary gaze[15].

Bunny therefore faces a crucial moment in his personal transformation: he faces

the crisis between the dictates of a culture and the reality of an individual. More

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[15] A modern-day example of this lasting taint: someone who has been convicted of a
crime and served his/her sentence, thus balancing his/her debt to the disciplinary state, is
generally known as an ex-convict. The stigma of once having run afoul of the law – in
this case the label "convict" – doesn't necessarily go away even after the demands of the
disciplinary state have been satisfied.

specifically, he faces the distinction between status as identity (the cultural view – he's a gentleman) and action as identity (that which comprises the makeup of an individual – he's a criminal). The crisis comes as he and Raffles return from their felony, walking casually through the streets "for all the world as though we were returning from a dance" (19). Bunny marvels at Raffles's calmness, the degree to which the famous respectable cricketer maintains his cultural sophistication, the way the secret criminal can long for a homely fire because, in Raffles's words, "I'm as cold as Keats' owl" (19). Bunny expresses his cultural crisis like this:

> He could think of Keats on his way from a felony! He could hanker for his fireside like another. Floodgates were loosened within me, and the plain English of our adventure rushed over me as cold as ice. Raffles was a burglar. I had helped to commit one burglary, therefore I was a burglar too. Yet I could stand and warm myself by his fire, and watch him empty his pockets, as though we had done nothing wonderful or wicked! (19).

It seems never to have occurred to Bunny before this moment that one labeled as a criminal in this culture might emerge from the criminal state once more as a gentleman, a human being with refined appetites and conventional bodily requirements. Why shouldn't a gentleman need to be warmed by a nice fire after a cold night's work, even if that work was criminal? And yet the one activity, standing in nice rooms by a roaring fire, carries with it an air of sophistication and entitlement, while the other activity, robbing a jewellery store, implies a level of depravity incompatible with these rooms and this fire. That implication, at least, resonates in Bunny's mind and, he seems to presume,

in the minds of his readers, because that implication reflects the cultural view that the codes of the gentleman are incompatible with the activities of the criminal.

And yet, as Bunny discovers, he and Raffles have indeed emerged from the liminal space of crime once more as gentleman, transformed now by the experience (they are materially richer now, and bonded together by the communitas of shared liminal endeavor) and yet somehow externally unaltered. Bunny reflects on this sudden breach in his cultural self-definition and waits for his cultural conscience, that which he took for granted before this night, to kick in: "My blood froze. My heart sickened. My brain whirled. How I had liked this villain! How I had admired him! How my liking and admiration must turn to loathing and disgust! I waited for the change. I longed to feel it in my heart. But – I longed and waited in vain!" (19). For Bunny, all relations that came before the robbery must now, he believes, be altered. His respect and regard for Raffles must vanish, as must his own self-esteem. And yet these things remain in place. The conventional system of classification upon which Bunny has relied until this moment – the system that assumed gentlemen were "good" and criminals were "bad" – is threatened by Raffles's dual-embodiment of "gentleman" and "criminal."

Raffles notes this struggle and attempts to assuage Bunny's cultural conscience as the latter contemplates the unsettling liminoid nature of this criminal activity. He shares with Bunny that his own first criminal adventure took place while he was in the Colonies playing cricket and found himself "in much the same fix" that Bunny found himself earlier that night. He says that thievery was his only way out that night and that he intended such an excursion to be a one-time event. "[B]ut I'd tasted blood," he continues, "and it was all over with me. Why should I work when I could steal? Why

settle down to some humdrum uncongenial billet, when excitement, romance, danger, and a decent living were all going begging together?" (21). His use of the word "decent" is certainly ironic there, given the subject matter, and also threatening, given that Raffles conducts "indecent" acts in a decidedly decent manner. He then rationalizes his chosen profession: "Of course, it's very wrong, but we can't all be moralists, and the distribution of wealth is very wrong to begin with. Besides," he adds, "you're not at it all the time" (21). Here he cites the flaws in the legal code – at least those parts that govern the distribution of property – that, in his articulation, at least, justify his violation of that code, a justification that adds to the cultural threat he poses. He also establishes here the personal initiative by which he acts: he clearly engages in this criminal activity by choice, and he clearly has decided to evade detection, to leave temporarily the conventional bounds of ordered society, in the pursuit of his own ends (and in service of his own carefully delineated ethical standards). He is a liminoid mover, a man with the self-awareness and cultural-awareness needed to foster the Gothic ambiguity that allows him to hide his liminoid criminal activity behind a genteel exterior that renders that activity inconceivable.

Bunny crosses this same threshold into liminoid criminality on the night of their first criminal adventure. Raffles celebrates their success and, at first, invites Bunny to join him on future escapades as their financial situations render such activities necessary. Bunny begs Raffles not to ask him for such a commitment, after which Raffles withdraws his invitation: "All right, my boy! You are quite right and I'm worse than wrong. I'll never ask it again. Go, if you want to, and come again about midday for the cash. There was no bargain; but, of course, I'll get you out of your scrape – especially after the way

you've stood by me tonight" (21). It is now Bunny's turn to make his decision, the choice that consolidates the liminoid nature of his future criminal activity: "I was round again with my blood on fire. 'I'll do it again,' I said through my teeth'." He then emphasizes his immersion into this liminoid criminal partnership: "I'll lend you a hand as often as you like! What does it matter now? I've been in it once. I'll be in it again. I've gone to the devil anyhow. I can't go back, and wouldn't if I could. Nothing matters another rap! When you want me, I'm your man" (22). "And that," Bunny narrates as the first story concludes, "is how Raffles and I joined felonious forces on the Ides of March" (22). The key phrase in Bunny's final monologue: "I can't go back, and wouldn't if I could." He suggests, of course, that the taint of his liminal criminality is permanent; he cannot undo that stain on his moral character. That is not to say, however, that the continuation of that activity is mandatory. He could resume his conventional life with the private knowledge of his secret sin forever on his conscience. It is the second part of his sentence that finally renders him a liminoid mover; he says that he wouldn't remove the stain from his character even if he could. He embraces this new role, this new identity for himself. And he does so willingly, intentionally, and without cultural mandate; these three conditions satisfy the requirements of what Turner calls the "liminoid." Bunny makes a choice in this moment, as Raffles did after his first criminal adventure those years before, to pursue a life of liminoid criminal mobility.

Had Hornung abandoned these characters after this initial story, we would have been left with two gentlemen who turned to crime and thus stand eventually to lose their places in respectable society. Nothing is quite that simple with Raffles, however. Though he and Bunny continue to conduct their secret criminal activities, it cannot be

said that they fully turn to crime. Raffles, especially, never fully abandons the cultural

identities that allow him to hide his criminality behind a coded show of respectability.

Hornung, in other words, does not allow an easy condemnation of his central character on

the grounds that he commits crimes; the author seems also to offer a rather insidious

commentary on the efficacy of the disciplinary mechanisms of a society that fails to see

the Gothic potential of a seemingly respectable gentleman. Of course, to be fair,

Raffles's public guise is so perfectly chosen that the failure of the disciplinary system to

see his criminality is perhaps forgivable. Bunny himself is shocked at first to learn of the

criminality of the man better known in public circles as an accomplished, and famous,

amateur cricketer.

Raffles: The Amateur Cricketer

In his essay "Raffles and Miss Blandish," George Orwell writes that it is

"particularly fitting that [Raffles's] chosen game should be cricket" because it "helps to

define the exact nature of his crime" (233). Orwell suggests that this is so because

cricket "gives expression to a well-marked trait in the English character, the tendency to

value 'form' or 'style' more highly than success" (233). "In making Raffles a cricketer

as well as a burglar," Orwell argues, "Hornung was not merely providing him with a

plausible disguise; he was also drawing the sharpest moral contrast that he was able to

imagine" (234). And indeed, given the English cultural reverence for cricket, and given

Hornung's own love for the game, it seems that Hornung approaches cultural blasphemy

for the manner in which Raffles abuses his exalted position and, perhaps more

insidiously, the manner in which he applies the principles of his sport to the particular

style with which he commits his crimes. Raffles takes the ethical and moral stances that

make cricket Victorian England's most revered game and transforms those same precepts

into the *modus operandi* for his criminal adventures. In writing such a character,

however, Hornung does not seek to undermine the ethics of cricket, a set of ethics to

which he seems to have devoted a good portion of his life; rather, he shines a light into

the degree to which that ethic might be deployed, intact, into a different sphere.

That cricket was Victorian England's most treasured sport is well-established.

Andrew Lang wrote, "Cricket is a very humanizing game. It appeals to the emotions of

local patriotism and pride. It is eminently unselfish; the love of it never leaves us, and

binds all brethren together, whatever their politics and rank may be. […] Cricket is

simply the most catholic and diffused, the most innocent, kindly and manly of popular

pleasures" (qtd. in Brodribb 4-5).[16] Others have drawn conclusions about the cultural

impact that cricket and its famous players had on the Victorian era. Rowland Bowen

describes the years of 1894-1914, during the early part of which Raffles would have

played, "not as *a* Golden Age of cricket but as *the* Golden Age of cricket" (138; original

emphasis). He makes this assertion in part because of the growth of the game and the

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[16] Not all commentators have been quite so charitable in their depictions of the Victorian
conception of cricket. Neville Cardus reports, rather sardonically, that "The Victorians
so endowed [cricket] with their own moral grandeur that to this day the president of Little
Puddleton cricket club cannot take the chair at the annual meeting without telling his
audience that cricket is 'synonymous' with straight conduct, honour bright, and all the
other recognized Christian virtues.   Hear him: '…on and off the field you must play the
game. Cricket stands for all that is finest in the character of an Englishman. When we
wish to say that something has been done that is not "true blue," we say, "It's not
cricket."' And so on and so forth, year after year. The wonder is that players of other
games do not despise cricketers as so many prigs" (58).

increase of British national and international organizational control of the game, but also because many of the game's greatest-ever players dominated during this time. One such player was W.G. Grace, whom Bowen and many others consider the greatest English player of all time. Bowen suggests that perhaps Grace's greatest achievement was the duality of his cricket prowess and his accessibility; he "took his own masterful play to people wherever they were," becoming a "champion" that people thronged to see "in all his majesty of frame and cricket ability" (110-111). Bowen then suggests the cultural importance of such a figure:

> The dispossessed proletariat in search of an identity had found, if not an identity in W.G., a god whom they could worship. If he had not arisen at the time he did it is very doubtful if he would have caught the right moment of history: someone else, most probably in some other walk of life, might have done so. Grace did not give cricket a new lease of life – it was anything but moribund – but he gave it, and especially the first-class game, a new dimension of life. If he had arisen later, his performances would have been no less wonderful statistically but they might well have not turned him into a figure of myth and legend. Industrial England was in bad need of a hero: as Grace rose, the monarchy was withdrawing into privacy so that at the height of W.G.'s powers, there was no national figurehead. W.G. by his exploits became that figurehead and became a folk-hero. (111)

Raffles operated in this same sphere, though of course Hornung does not give his character the same cricketing talent and cultural command enjoyed by the real-life W.G.

Grace. Nevertheless, Raffles played the same game as the esteemed Grace, a game that

resonated with enough social import to generate for Victorians a much-needed national

hero[17]. The potential for Raffles to occupy a similarly lofty cultural position is at least

hinted at by this association. Cricketers had the potential in the Victorian era, as do our

professional athletes today, to gain iconic status. Raffles uses that potential notoriety,

however, for an entirely more sinister purpose.

E.W. Hornung evidently shared his culture's moral reverence for the game.

Malcolm Tozer, one of only a handful of scholars to devote attention to Hornung's work,

reports that cricket was, after writing, Hornung's "second passion." Tozer writes, "In

part cricket was just a game – school matches, country house games, backyard tip-and-

run for the invalid, and playing-card cricket for the rainy day, provided episodes and

scenery in many of his tales; but in fact it was more than just a game, more [to quote from

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[17] Jack Williams argues further that cricket's cultural importance in the Victorian period carried forward well into the 20th century. In the introduction to his book *Cricket and England: A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-war Years*, Williams writes: "Cricket was celebrated as far more than a game. The social groups with economic and political power esteemed cricket as an expression of a distinctively English sense of moral worth and cricket had a key role in how they imagined themselves and their fitness to exercise authority. They believed that cricket encouraged and reflected a sense of social harmony which extended beyond the world of cricket" (xiii). He writes later that in the early twentieth century, "Cricket discourses stressed that it was permeated by a spirit of sportsmanship and fair play which expressed English character and extended to other parts of life" (1). He then quotes Lord Harris, "probably the most powerful figure within the administration of first-class cricket in the 1920s," who said, "We cricketers . . . are something more than mere participants in a game, we are the ministers of a high moral and educational medium" (1-2). Lord Harris, Williams points out, was born in 1851 and had, with many others who influenced the moral texture of cricket in the early part of the twentieth century, "passed [his] most impressionable years in the Victorian and Edwardian eras" (4). The implication is that such leading figures in English cricket had carried forward into the 1920s and beyond the moral weight granted to cricket in the Victorian period.

Hornung's 1909 novel *Mr. Justice Raffles*] 'the quintessence and epitome of life'" (14).

This reverence for the game, both cultural for the Victorians and personal for Hornung,

forms the heart of Orwell's comment regarding Raffles's crimes: Hornung was "drawing

the sharpest moral contrast that he was able to imagine" by making his accomplished

cricketer an equally accomplished thief.

What Orwell and others have not fully explored is the degree to which Raffles's

skill as a cricketer enables and informs his skill as a cracksman. It's not just that Raffles

values form and style, as Orwell suggests; the overlap between the skill sets required by

cricket and thievery is grounded in more than aesthetics. In "Gentlemen and Players,"

Bunny watches the noted slow-bowler Raffles at work on the cricket pitch. As he

watches, he marvels both at Raffles's artistry as a cricketer and the degree to which

Raffles's artful talents connect his two seemingly disparate worlds: "What I admired,

and what I remember [in Raffles's display of bowling prowess], was the combination of

resource and cunning, of patience and precision, of headwork and handiwork, which

made every over an artistic whole. It was all so characteristic of that other Raffles whom

I alone knew!" (46).[18]

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[18] It is worth noting that Hornung made Raffles a slow-bowler and not a fast-bowler.
Much like a power pitcher in baseball, a fast-bowler attempts for the most part to
overpower the batsman with the velocity and violence of a ball thrown at top speeds. A
slow-bowler, on the other hand, relies on the strategic placement of the ball, of varying
speeds and spins not to overpower the batter, but rather to outmaneuver him. A slow-
bowler uses misdirection, variety, intelligence, courage, and cunning to defeat his
opponents. A fast-bowler certainly may employ any or all of these qualities, but he may
do so with the safety net of superior physical or athletic prowess should those qualities
prove insufficient to secure victory. A slow-bowler has no such safety net – he must rely
on his own internal resources. And as Raffles demonstrates throughout *The Amateur*

Despite his consummate skill on the cricket pitch, though, Raffles confesses to Bunny that he has lost his enthusiasm for the sport that made him famous: "I'd chuck up cricket tomorrow, Bunny, if it wasn't for the glorious protection it affords a person of my proclivities." Bunny very sensibly responds that Raffles's notoriety would seemingly bring danger to one with criminal inclinations. "My dear Bunny," Raffles responds, "that's exactly where you make a mistake. To follow crime with reasonable impunity you simply must have a parallel ostensible career – the more public the better" (41). This is the very heart of Raffles's ambiguous liminoid cultural status – he uses his well-known public persona as a façade while he carves out a secret cultural space through which to move undetected. He deflects suspicion by the nature of his seemingly unimpeachable public character. And, continues Raffles, he's not alone in this tactic: "Mr. Peace, of pious memory, disarmed suspicion by acquiring a local reputation for playing the fiddle and taming animals, and it's my profound conviction that Jack the Ripper was a really eminent public man, whose speeches were very likely reported alongside his atrocities" (41-2). This notion must necessarily be terrifying to a readership culturally predisposed to equate outward appearance and success with moral uprightness and evident moral depravity with the lower social orders. The notion that one might encounter, and perhaps admire the appearance of, a man who in reality is Jack the Ripper should fill Hornung's readers with the sublime sense of Gothic terror as they walk the city he has so revealed. Raffles ends this conversation with Bunny with this advice: "Fill the bill in some prominent part, and you'll never be suspected of doubling it with another of equal

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Cracksman, he certainly commands those internal resources needed for both cricketing and criminal prowess.

prominence. That's why I want you to cultivate journalism, my boy, and sign all you can. And it's the one and only reason why I don't burn my bats for firewood" (42). Raffles's confession here seems designed to shock his Victorian readers: though an accomplished cricketer, he dislikes the hallowed game and pursues it only to mask his secret life of crime.

Rather than reducing his bats to kindling, then, Raffles maintains his guise as a cricketer. In "Gentlemen and Players," he accepts what is for him an offensive invitation from the wealthy Lord Amersteth to visit his country house in Dorset for a week of cricket to celebrate the majority of Amersteth's son Crowley. Raffles receives this invitation explicitly because of his cricketing prowess; his presence will add credibility to Lord Amersteth's gathering. In the late-Victorian period, such an invitation would be a fairly common occurrence for someone in Raffles's position. Rowland Bowen reports that the period of 1894-1914 was the "hey-day of country-house cricket" (143). As in "Gentlemen and Players," upper-class owners of country houses often held week-long cricket contests during which they would house the players, professionals and amateurs alike. "Cricket grounds were a status symbol," Bowen says, "and even more status [was] attached to the ability to attract great cricketers to play" (143). "An amateur cricketer of merit," he says further, "could spend a happy August staying in one great house after another, playing good class cricket all the time, and well housed, fed, and wined – paying no more than his travelling expenses and suitable tips to the staff" (144). The country-house match to which Raffles and Bunny are invited is no mere plot device; it serves as more than just a literary excuse for us to see Raffles at his thieving finest. It is at once a recognizable social convention, recognizable at least to the readers of the day, as well as

a testament to Raffles's reputation as a top-rate amateur cricketer. He is not a mediocre player passing the time by playing cricket; he is a star, a highly accomplished player whose presence at such an event would be highly coveted.

And yet Raffles finds the sentiment behind the invitation quite infuriating, a reaction that underscores a crucial component of Raffles's character: he is most proud of his status as an *amateur* cricketer. "I felt venomous!" he tells Bunny after receiving Lord Amersteth's invitation. "Nothing riles me more than being asked about for my cricket as though I were a pro myself" (46). To be thought of as a pro would deprive Raffles of his status as a gentleman; it would mean that he's poor enough to need to play cricket for money, a slap in the face for the highly accomplished (and proud) gentleman amateur (though of course Raffles really does need the money at this point). It would also imply an ironically offensive stain on Raffles's character, a suggestion that he is a man of unrefined ethical capacities. Richard Holt explains that the term "amateur," a term Raffles uses to describe his cricketing and criminal activities alike, described more in the Victorian period than just one's status as an unpaid participant. "Fair play," Holt says, "was the watchword of the gentleman amateur." He explains further:

> Amateurs were gentlemen of the middle and upper classes who played sports that were often also enjoyed by the common people – athletics, rowing, or cricket, for example – but who played these and other games in a special way. Fair play meant not only respecting the written rules of the game, but abiding by what was generally understood to be the spirit of the game. (98)

There was, continues Holt, a Golden Rule-type ethic at play for such amateurs: "A true amateur should never seek to gain any advantage over an opponent that he would not expect his opponent to take over him" (99). And a respectable amateur was expected to be the arbiter and enforcer of this ethic, to the degree that "[e]ven when referees were introduced, the true amateur was still privately obliged to police himself" (99). This self-policing seems significant to Raffles's conduct on the cricket pitch as well as his obvious preference to keep up his guise as an amateur cricketer and a gentleman even when the gaze of the disciplinary society is pointed elsewhere. And yet, in keeping with Raffles's paradoxical code-shifting, Lord Amersteth's invitation, and the slight on his character that it implies, incites in Raffles the desire to commit crime. Bunny, ever sensible, asks why Raffles has accepted such an offensive invitation. "To punish them," Raffles says, "and – because we shall be jolly hard up, Bunny, before the season's over!" (46). It is well for Raffles to acknowledge his own financial straits; it is altogether more insulting for his potential hosts to imply such difficulties because, again, he's an amateur (in cricket and theft alike) and thus presumably above such concerns. His plan, in short, is to accept Lord Amersteth's invitation in order to rob the many wealthy people who will also attend the festivities. Raffles explains further one of his guiding principles, indeed a foundational bit of the ethical system Raffles finds so important (and often so conveniently rationalizes away): "As a general rule nothing would induce me to abuse my position as a guest. I've never done it, Bunny. But in this case we're engaged like the waiters and the band, and by heaven we'll take our toll! […] Besides, these people deserve it, and can afford it" (46). Raffles once again defies the social position he appears to occupy: a gentlemen cricketer was expected to welcome such an opportunity

to mingle with high society. Raffles does welcome the opportunity, but only as a means to commit theft.

Whereas we tend to think of amateur athletes as inferior in skill and status to professionals, there was a different cultural distinction at play in the world of Victorian cricket. As Holt puts it, "professionalism was all right provided professionals knew their place" (107). He reports that professionals, rather than their more dignified amateur counterparts, frequently performed as bowlers[19], in part because bowling was "thought to be too much like hard work," and in part because "it was undignified for a gentleman's bowling to be struck nonchalantly round the ground by a social inferior" (107). Holt continues:

> If this was not enough, professionals were also expected to look after the ground, clean the kit, serve the drinks, enter the ground by a separate entrance, and change in separate rooms. They even had their names set out differently on the score-card, with the gentleman's initials preceding his name in the normal fashion and the professional's placed after his surname. (107)

The cause for this social distinction is not so different from the many social stratifications present in Victorian society already; professionals who played for money did so because, presumably, they needed to, whereas gentlemen – those whose monetary situations were much more stable – played for a higher purpose, for love of the game and its artistry,

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[19] Raffles, of course, goes against this tendency. He is both a gentleman and a bowler.

without needing to be paid[20]. They were considered to be, or considered themselves to be, above monetary issues, and thus above in social status those who needed money.

Raffles does adhere, to some degree at least, to these tenets of amateurism, both in cricket and more importantly in crime: he loathes to perform for money, or to take an easy job, as he often tells Bunny; his motivation is the "pure" motivation of criminal artistry. And yet he also embodies an essential crisis of cultural categories. Because he knows well the codes of the amateur cricketer (and the gentleman), he can assume the behaviour mandated by those codes while pursuing his own conflicting agenda. It surely gave readers considerable pause for thought to see the admirable ethics of amateurism – of doing things for a higher purpose and at a necessarily sophisticated level of accomplishment – applied to the practice of theft. Raffles shows, however, that without altering the spirit of the game, an accomplished gentleman cricketer might also be an equally accomplished criminal, and that such a criminal might also be a gentleman, and further that those two codes might be intermixed, or exchanged for each other, at a moment's notice. We see in these paradoxes the heart of Raffles's remarkable cultural ambiguity and the menacing crisis of categories he represents.

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[20] Richard Holt reports that W.G. Grace, the "greatest Victorian amateur of all[,] fell notably short of the ideal" of the gentleman amateur: he was frequently unclean, he was at times boisterous and intentionally distracting on the cricket pitch, he "twice accepted large testimonials and organized his own playing-tours while remaining an amateur in name," and essentially "never grew up" from the boy who first discovered a talent for cricket in his youth. "Only his prodigious talent," Holt says, "earned [Grace] the right to be different without dishonour" (101).

Raffles: The Master of Codes

Raffles's potential for Gothic monstrosity by way of cultural code-switching is established within the first two stories of *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman*. As I've mentioned, it is in these first two stories that we see Raffles as a gentleman and a thief, a national cricketer and an accomplished criminal, a public school man and a villain. The remaining stories in the collection serve at once to amplify Raffles's monstrous characteristics and to place him beyond his fictional contemporaries in regard to his cultural multiplicity and potential for Gothic impact. He is shown in these later stories to be more than adept at code-switching, more than skilled at thievery and disguise, more than worthy of considering himself a criminal artist. He is shown rather to be so frighteningly good at everything he does, so skilled at negotiating the various cultural codes inherent to his ambiguous cultural position, that indeed he is not subject to any of those codes. As he says to Bunny, in Bunny's words, "Human nature was a board of checkers; why not reconcile oneself to alternate black and white? Why desire to be all one thing or all the other, like our forefathers on the stage or in the old-fashioned fiction? For his part, he enjoyed himself on all squares of the board, and liked the light better for the shade" (137). Raffles uses the codes, the various squares of black and white meant to confine one's movements; he manipulates and blends and switches them, but he is not consistently governed by any of them, as a member of a disciplinary society is thought to be. Rather, Raffles demonstrates an ability to fashion his own cultural codes of behaviour.

While some characters in the fiction of this time – Sherlock Holmes and Buchan's Richard Hannay, for example – might be said to shift cultural codes and thus inhabit a

similar position to Raffles, one point distinguishes Hornung's work from these others.
The protagonists in both Doyle's and Buchan's novel engage in direct liminoid contest
with identifiable liminoid opponents. Throughout Hornung's stories, Raffles fights
against the more abstract enemy of the cultural forces that would render his current
ambiguous status untenable (or, with incarceration, impossible). Though in "Gentlemen
and Players" we meet the disguised and reportedly formidable Scotland Yard Inspector
Mackenzie, the police do not as yet seem to be Raffles's direct opponent; Mackenzie
enters the story on the heels of the criminals whom Raffles outsmarts in the jewel heist at
Lord Amersteth's house. We see Mackenzie again in "The Return Match," but once
more his business is to track down a criminal, this time the escaped convict Crawshay,
one of those originally arrested in that same jewel heist. Though Raffles has encountered
Mackenzie twice to this point, in other words, in both cases their paths have crossed
rather coincidentally. It is only in the final story of the collection, "The Gift of the
Emperor," that Mackenzie enters the scene (again in disguise – he's also an accomplished
liminoid mover) as Raffles's direct opponent. Throughout these stories, until the last,
Raffles's greatest opponent is scandal – he hopes to evade the gaze of the police simply
for the pleasure of his criminal sport and, more importantly, the power of continued
cultural ambiguity. As Orwell puts it, "The ruin that constantly threatens [Raffles and
Bunny] is all the blacker because they only doubtfully 'belong.' A duke who has served
a prison sentence is still a duke, whereas a mere man-about-town if once disgraced,
ceases to be 'about town' forevermore" (234). It is this abstract enemy, and his nebulous
position as both a cultural insider and an outsider, as we shall see, that pushes Raffles to

write his own codes and then master the code-shifting liminoid practices that define his

character.

One facet of Raffles's character that must not be denied, of course, is that he is

not just a criminal, but an habitual criminal, and a highly skilled one. After their Bond

Street jewellery heist, Bunny asks if Raffles has done such a thing before. "Before?"

Raffles says. "My dear Bunny, you offend me! Did it look like a first attempt? Of

course I have done it before" (20). And yet Raffles's criminal experience does not

necessarily equate to depravity; he's hasn't completely abandoned the gentleman's code

or the sportsman's code, and though he admits that he is sometimes driven to crime by

financial need – as in that Bond Street adventure – he has other, loftier motivations as

well. Hornung persistently depicts Raffles as not merely a thief, but a self-styled criminal

artist, a craftsman who adheres closely to the sportsman's code – therefore taking pride in

the execution of a daring and clever plan rather than base pleasure in the financial

rewards of a criminal endeavor – and blends with it his own sense of ethics and

aesthetics. In a city that would happily relegate him to prison, that would on the surface

categorize him as just another lawbreaker, a sophisticated pickpocket if you will, Raffles

prides himself on the courage and intelligence it takes to conduct his subversive artistry.

We see this artistic desire most clearly explored in Raffles's dealing with the

brashly flamboyant millionaire Reuben Rosenthall in "A Costume Piece." Raffles seeks

to steal the two huge purple diamonds Rosenthall flaunts on his person explicitly because

Rosenthall brags that they cannot be stolen. The millionaire, after all, goes about armed

with a revolver and has in his employ a noted prize-fighter named Purvis whose job it is

to protect his boss's riches. Raffles admits to Bunny, somewhat sheepishly, that he

intends to steal the jewels for other than pecuniary reasons. "It is horribly obvious, I admit," he says to Bunny. "But – yes, I have set my heart on them! To be quite frank, I have had them on my conscience for some time; one couldn't hear so much of the man, and his prize-fighter, and his diamonds, without feeling it a kind of duty to have a go for them; but when it comes to brandishing a revolver and practically challenging the world, the thing becomes inevitable" (25). When Bunny objects that the theft really isn't necessary, Raffles draws comparisons between his criminal work and the work of other artists: ""Necessity, my dear Bunny? Does the writer only write when the wolf is at the door? Does the painter paint for bread alone?" (26). He goes on to suggest that the pleasure to be derived from stealing Rosenthall's jewels comes precisely from the difficulty in doing so. He tells Bunny that he would rob St. Paul's Cathedral if he could, or even the Bank of England given the time and resources to pull off such a job, but adds, "I could no more scoop a till when the shopwalker wasn't looking than I could bag apples out of an old woman's basket" (26). In these words to Bunny, Raffles shows open disdain for those who would steal from the poor, the hard-working, the helpless – he mentions the shopkeeper and the old woman – and accepts the challenge to steal from those like Rosenthall who are bold enough to think they can't be robbed and rich enough not to be unduly harmed by the robbery. In this stance Raffles dons the mantle of a Victorian Robin Hood, though he stops short of giving to the poor that which he has stolen from the rich. But he employs all that is admirable in that medieval hero – the cunning, intelligence, courage, flair. This is Raffles at his most ambiguous. He's a criminal, but more importantly he's a master of the several codes he follows, a mastery that liberates him to combine the codes – in this case, those of the sportsman, the dashing

criminal, and the gentleman aesthete – in order to satisfy his own personal urges at the expense of the property those around him can (in his estimation) do without.

Bunny, it should be mentioned, sees Raffles's ambiguity in a rather less-than-admirable light, especially when not in Raffles's otherwise magnetic presence. "I saw the folly of the enterprise to which I had committed myself – the sheer, gratuitous, unnecessary folly of it," he confesses to his readers about the Rosenthall case. He goes on to say that "the paradoxes in which Raffles reveled, and the frivolous casuistry which was nevertheless half sincere, and which his mere personality rendered wholly plausible at the moment of utterance, appealed very little to me when recalled in cold blood" (27). It may be supposed that Bunny's occasional disdain for Raffles's exploits, and for the "casuistry" with which Raffles rationalizes the "paradoxes" of his code-switching, reflects the difficulty his readership might face in accepting with admiration the code-switching achievements of the criminal. Bunny confesses once again his on-again-off-again enjoyment of his friend's liminoid endeavors: "I admired the spirit of pure mischief in which he seemed prepared to risk his liberty and his life, but I did not find it an infectious spirit on calm reflection" (27). He admits here that he gets caught up, as a reader might, in the emotional thrill of such mischief, but that his conventional moral sense (his discipline) returns, as a reader's might, during quieter moments. Bunny nevertheless continues to assist Raffles, thus at least partially overcoming for himself and perhaps on behalf of his readers the moral repugnance his disciplinary culture might feel at the partial violations of cultural codes considered dear.

In fact, Bunny shows himself to be capable of taking his liminoid initiative from time to time, as was Dr. Watson in the Sherlock Holmes stories. An emblematic moment

of Watson's initiative can be found in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as Watson tracks

Holmes to the threshold of the moorland hut that serves as the detective's base of

operations in Dartmoor. In "A Costume Piece," Bunny similarly (and rather foolishly, as

it turns out) determines to discover for himself the layout of the Rosenthall house, and in

doing so discovers another of Raffles's many sides – that of the master of disguised

liminoid movement. He also discovers a bit of Raffles's rather fiery temper: "I turned

around and faced the dark scowl and the dirty clenched fists of a dilapidated tramp. 'You

fool!' said he. 'You utter idiot!'" (29). Raffles later apologizes for and yet explains his

anger: "Here am I trying every dodge – begging at the door one night – hiding in the

shrubs the next – doing every mortal thing but stand and stare at the house as you went

and did. It's a costume piece, and in you rush in your ordinary clothes" (29). Raffles's

frustration stems in part from the fact that Bunny does not immediately appreciate the

aesthetic or artistic side of these criminal endeavors. Like Holmes and Stapleton,

Richard Hannay, Dorian Gray, Dracula, and other liminoid movers, Raffles makes

masterful use of acting and disguise to secure his own safe passage through his various

exploits in the city. After this escapade, though, Bunny comes to understand Raffles's

aesthetic sensibility and marvels at the extent to which Raffles carries his passion for

disguise; he sees in Raffles's choice of "vile" cheap tobacco the full extent of Raffles's

liminoid immersion: "That he could carry his character-sketch to such a pitch – he who

would only smoke one brand of cigarettes! It was the last, least touch of the insatiable

artist" (30). As with his criminality in general, Raffles shows himself to be both an artist

and a master at disguise; his ability to blend his appearance into his surroundings

provides him with the ultimate liminoid freedom and facilitates his movement through the city on his own terms.

Raffles demonstrates to Bunny more, though, than just skill in disguise. He also shows him the extent of his commitment to disguise by taking Bunny to his secret studio tucked away in the hard-to-reach interior of Chelsea. The pair took buses from Piccadilly to Sloane Street and then to King's Road (south of Hyde Park, south-west of Buckingham Palace). Here they walk (Raffles in the lead, Bunny following a short distance behind) across the road, "up a dark turning," into a "still darker flagged alley," and through a door at the farther end into a still blacker darkness (30). After another minute, they enter Raffles's secret lair, complete with all the accoutrements of the studio painter, which is Raffles's guise here in Chelsea[21]. Raffles describes his careful management of this hideout:

> I have the stove lit on principle twice a week, and look in and leave a newspaper and a smell of Sullivans […]. Meanwhile I pay my rent, and am a good tenant in every way; and it's a very useful *pied-a-terre* – there's no saying how useful it might be at a pinch. As it is, the billycock comes in and the topper goes out, and nobody takes the slightest notice of either. (31)

Raffles further admits that "of course, my name is not Raffles in the King's Road" (31). After this revelation, Raffles explains for Bunny the value of his disguises; though he

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[21] Raffles's secret hideout in Chelsea calls to mind Dr. Jekyll's "secret" hideout in Soho, the residence he inhabits while in the guise of Mr. Hyde.

does not explicitly mention their value as a means to defy the visual gaze of the

disciplinary society, he says nearly as much in his own words:

> In some cases [disguises are] half the battle, and it's always pleasant to
> feel that, if the worst comes to the worst, you needn't necessarily be
> convicted under your own name. Then they're indispensable in dealing
> with the fences. I drive all my bargains in the tongue and raiment of
> Shoreditch. If I didn't there'd be the very devil to pay in blackmail. (31)

Raffles is safer, he believes, if he does not appear to be who he is. By defeating the

visually-tuned forces of the disciplinary and criminal forces in the city, Raffles feels free

both to conduct his criminal business and to emerge with his reputation intact should that

criminal business go awry. Once again, it is his mastery of blended identity that renders

him most successful as a criminal and most monstrous as a villain. He proves himself to

be willing and able to switch cultural identities at will and to master the codes that go

with each identity. He might be anyone, anywhere, and any time. With his skills and

resources, and with no direct opponent to counter him, the city is at his mercy.

That is not to say, though, that Raffles is immune to the danger inherent to his

nebulous cultural position. As later stories reveal, Raffles is most directly threatened by

characters who occupy similarly ambiguous positions in this disciplinary culture. In

"Nine Points of Law," the half-shady lawyer Mr. Bennett Addenbrooke – a police-court

lawyer who, according to Raffles, has "a first-rate practice on the seamy side" (95) –

places an advertisement promising a two-thousand-pound reward for someone to perform

a risky task for him. Raffles and Bunny answer the advertisement under aliases, but

when they meet the lawyer in person, Raffles's notoriety betrays him: he says his name

is Mr. Glasspool, to which Addenbrooke responds, "Not up at Lord's, however! My dear

sir, I have seen you take far too many wickets to make any mistake!" (96).

Addenbrooke's response to Raffles's application nicely captures the challenge Raffles

faces as a man-about-town with a secret to hide; his notoriety is at once his disguise and,

when he encounters another ambiguous character, a threat to his security. Addenbrooke,

though, seems to appreciate Raffles's ambiguity; when he first discovers Raffles's

identity, Addenbrooke says, "And the man who is not above an alias happens to be just

the sort of man I want" (96). Just a few sentences later, however, Addenbrooke seems

unsure about Raffles and Bunny, and particularly of their suitability for the task he has in

mind:

> Yours is the first reply I have received; people who can afford to send long
>
> telegrams don't rush to the advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph*; but, on
>
> the other hand, I was not quite prepared to hear from men like yourselves.
>
> Candidly, and on consideration, I am not sure that you are the stamp of
>
> men for me – men who belong to good clubs! I rather intended to appeal
>
> to the –er – adventurous classes. (96)

For all of his cultural chameleonic ability, Raffles cannot really claim membership in

those adventurous classes to which Addenbrooke refers. Instead, he answers

Addenbrooke's objection with a rare bit of transparency, and in doing so calls upon his

amateur status (as a cricketer and a criminal) to satisfying the lawyer: "We are not

professional rogues, if that's what you mean. But on our beam-ends we are; we would do

a good deal for a thousand pounds apiece" (97). When talking to another ambiguous

character, a man who like Addenbrooke straddles the line between legal and illegal

conduct, Raffles sets aside his disguise for a moment and converses with candor, calling upon the communitas he shares with Addenbrooke by evoking codes of behaviour that another ambiguous character might understand.

Addenbrooke himself is rather conversant with the rationalizations and careful semantic constructions seemingly necessary to negotiate his own ambiguous position. While describing the theft he wants Raffles and Bunny to commit, he says: "It's illegal, but it's illegality in a good cause" (97). In these words Addenbrooke does a bit of code-switching on his own; he implies that one code – the avoidance of scandal, in this case – might supersede the legal code. Meanwhile, Addenbrooke's client, Sir Bernard Debenham, another who violates the coded position he inhabits, prefers the solicitation of crime to the legal action and the scandal that would result from trying to recover the painting his son stole from him: "He would rather lose even his picture than have the whole thing get into the papers," Addenbrooke explains; "he has disowned his son, but he will not disgrace him; yet his picture he must have by hook or crook, and there's the rub!" (99). Addenbrooke adds his own rationalization to these words, arguing that the theft he has in mind is "not stealing; it's recovering stolen property" (99). This is an important distinction as Addenbrooke defines his cultural position: "stealing" would imply a certain vulgarity more in keeping with a common thief; "recovering stolen property" sounds nobler, more in keeping with the actions of a gentleman. Addenbrooke and Raffles both seem compelled to articulate and maintain the coded difference between these two cultural classifications.

Because of his social standing, Raffles often operates in such circles where scandal and negative notoriety are considered far worse than secret felonious activity – as

above, Addenbrook, Sir Debenham, and the Australian legislator Craggs all operate in this circle. For these men, the gentlemanly code of scandal-avoidance holds supremacy over the cut-and-dried legal code that would forbid theft. Raffles also operates among those who seem to need to rationalize their meta-legal behaviour. When Addenbrooke says, "It's illegal, but it's illegality in a good cause," he sounds an awful lot like Raffles, who offers the rationalization earlier that thievery is wrong but that the general distribution of wealth is fundamentally flawed and is, if anything, the greater evil (21). The need for such careful distinctions between the gentleman's code and the legal code indicates that both Raffles and Addenbrooke have not completely divorced themselves from the legal codes that form the foundation of their disciplinary society, or rather have not yet explained away all vestiges of the cultural guilt which they've been raised to assign to criminal endeavors. Characters in these stories who operate exclusively in the criminal realm, Crawshay and Old Baird for example, seem on the other hand to spend very little time assuaging their consciences; those who straddle the legal lines and therefore juggle competing cultural codes are more compelled to articulate and rationalize their criminal behaviour. It becomes interesting to note, then, that Raffles's status places him in elite circles where code-shifting and liminoid movement are, if anything, more highly valued than in what are more commonly thought to be the criminal classes. Addenbrooke finds it shocking that "men of your stamp," referring to Raffles and Bunny, would be willing to undertake such a nefarious venture. Raffles uses this "stamp" to negotiate a higher payment – he appeals to the notion that the scandal that would ensue if they were caught would not be worth two thousand pounds (again, the avoidance of scandal is the absolute on which the people of this class fall back). Raffles

explains: "My good sir, consider what it means to us. You spoke of those clubs; we should not only get kicked out of them, but put in prison like common burglars! It's true we're hard up, but it simply isn't worth it at the price. Double your stakes, and I for one am your man" (100). Ever the sportsman, however, Raffles agrees to a "sporting" double-or-nothing proposition – four thousand pounds for success, nothing for failure.

Half-shady characters like Addenbrooke serve to illuminate some of the ambiguity present in Raffles's makeup as well as Raffles's ability to converse and negotiate with those who operate perhaps differently than the disciplinary mandate of his society would allow. There are other characters in these stories, not half-shady but rather fully criminal, with whom Raffles interacts. His adept use of disguise and his understanding both of disciplinary and criminal conventions allow him to evade the one and employ the other, providing him with a set of skills that fosters a level of communitas, of shared understanding, with a few other criminals in these stories. During the night of the jewel heist at Lord Amersteth's estate (in "Gentlemen and Players"), Raffles sees out of his window the secret movements of the thieves, and because he's a thief himself, "in a minute," he tells Bunny, "I had guessed what the whole thing proved to be" (60). Only one practiced in the tactics of thievery could so quickly recognize the nefarious machinations of other criminals. In this recognition Raffles is one step ahead even of the formidable Scotland Yard detective MacKenzie, who has been present in the house in disguise (a disguise Raffles sees through, of course, given his expertise in this area as well), but who is left only to react after the crime has been committed (and who receives a bullet for his trouble). Actually, because of his criminal expertise and the communitas he shares with the other thieves, Raffles is two

steps ahead of MacKenzie and the disciplinary forces the detective represents: he sniffs

out the plan of the criminals and essentially foils it by stealing Lady Melrose's diamond-

and-sapphire necklace even as the pros (as he calls the other thieves) were trying to steal

it. Here Raffles's artful prowess on the cricket field is comparable to his artful prowess

in this other field of competition: in both arenas he knows the rules, the conventions, the

tactics to employ and the signals to decode in order to secure victory for himself.

One of the thieves nabbed in the theft at Lord Amersteth's estate, we find out in

"The Return Match," was a man who calls himself Crawshay. The manner in which

Hornung presents this villain provides further contrast, and thus further contextual

exploration, of Raffles's resistance to specific cultural classification. Raffles is, despite

his criminality, not a "common" criminal, as we can see by a comparison between his

elegant, gentlemanly articulation and Crawshay's more unrefined manner of speaking.

Consider the texture of Crawshay's first speech in "The Return Match": "'Lord love

yer,' cried Crawshay, ' 'e knew nothin'. 'E didn't expect me; 'e's all right. – And you're

the cool canary, you are,' he went on to Raffles. 'I knoo you were, but, do me proud,

you're one after my own kidney!'" (116-17). Both in idiom and accent, Hornung takes

pains to depict Crawshay as unpolished, working-class, a bit Cockney perhaps, certainly

as unschooled and culturally unrefined. In this scene, Crawshay has managed to infiltrate

Raffles's rooms at the Albany without detection even by the formidable Raffles;

Crawshay certainly commands an impressive level of courage and guile. His speech,

though, is that of an uneducated and unrefined man, or rather, the speech of what a

Victorian reader might consider to be a common criminal. Raffles, by contrast, is ever

the gentleman in grammar and idiom, in surroundings, and in appearance (except when

he's disguised). There is a sharp contrast between these two, underscoring once again the

Gothic ambiguity at the heart of Raffles's character. Crawshay neatly sums up this

contrast when he finally makes himself seen in Raffles's rooms: he loosens the collar of

the curate's outfit he has stolen and then expresses his relief, saying, "Didn't know how

much longer I might have to play the gent" (117). For all of his criminal activity, Raffles

never has to play the "gent" – he is, by the visible exterior standards of London society

and the degree to which he honors the expected code of conduct, a respectable gentleman.

When in disguise, he dresses down, whereas Crawshay had to dress "up" because,

culturally, he couldn't get much lower.

And yet, despite the cultural contrast between Crawshay and Raffles, the former

fully relies on the communitas he shares with his fellow criminal. Like Bunny during his

initial conversation with Raffles at the Albany in "The Ides of March," Crawshay takes

for granted that Raffles will honor the cultural codes he embodies: Bunny initially

assumes Raffles will act the gentleman and the public school chum; Crawshay counts on

Raffles to honor the ethics of the code of sporting criminals. He makes this demand on

Raffles: "Clean heels, then; that's what I want to show, and I leaves the way to you.

We're brothers in arms, though I ain't armed this time. It ain't necessary. You've too

much sense. But brothers we are, and you'll see a brother through. Let's put it at that.

You'll see me through in your own way. I leaves it all to you" (117). Raffles soon turns

to Bunny in order, more or less, to translate this speech (both to Bunny and to readers),

and also to restate the communitas these two criminals share: "You seize the situation,

Bunny? If our friend here is 'copped,' to speak his language, he means to 'blow the gaff'

on you and me. He is considerate enough not to say so in so many words, but it's plain

enough, and natural enough for that matter. I would do the same in his place" (118).

Though they come from different social classes, Raffles and Crawshay share a set of

ethics as well as a mutual understanding of the relational dynamics of criminals. What's

more, Raffles clearly admires Crawshay. "Not such a bad chap, that professor," Raffles

says to Bunny; "a real genius in his way, too" (120). Raffles applauds in particular the

manner in which Crawshay evaded detection. After learning that Crawshay first escaped

from prison during a heavy fog and under heavy fire, and then further escaped detection

by stealing a curate's clothes and moving about in that most unlikely disguise, Raffles

contradicts Bunny's assessment that Crawshaw is a sportsman:

> He's more; he's an artist, and I envy him. The curate, of all men!
>
> Beautiful – beautiful! But that's not all. I saw just now on the board at
>
> the club that there's been an outrage on the line near Dawlish. Parson
>
> found insensible in the six foot way. Our friend again. The telegram
>
> doesn't say so, but it's obvious; he's simply knocked some other fellow
>
> out, changed clothes again, and come on gaily to town. Isn't it great? I do
>
> believe it's the best thing of the kind that's ever been done! (114)

In addition to presenting Raffles with another problem to solve, Crawshay's

presence in the text highlights the degree to which Raffles creates his own value system.

While others, including those in disciplinary power, might be concerned about the several

crimes mentioned there, Raffles celebrates the artistry of the escape; while operating

according to his criminal-artist code, he is much more invested in the manner in which

cultural discipline might be evaded than in the social order that discipline seeks to

preserve. For all of the refined gentlemanliness he commands, Raffles is not above

connecting with and even admiring those from another class who excel in the same nefarious endeavors he secretly undertakes. Though from the outside there's nothing about Raffles to suggest he could connect with a career criminal like Crawshay, in the sphere of liminoid motion, a real communitas between two such men might be forged. It is this communitas that leads Raffles, much to Bunny's chagrin, straight to Inspector MacKenzie with an offer to "lend a hand" toward the capture of the very man Raffles has just committed to help escape (123). The offer, of course, is a ruse; Raffles stages a supposed assault, complete with a self-inflicted head wound and some carefully self-applied chloroform, which creates enough of a diversion that Crawshay has time to flee. In this way Raffles honors the sporting-criminal code Crawshay has called him on while only partially violating the legal code of his country: he has not attempted to prove Crawshay innocent, nor has he attempted permanently to shield the criminal from the disciplinary agents who seek him. He has only allowed Crawshay to avoid capture this time, and he has done so in a manner designed not to attract the disciplinary gaze to himself. He allows one escape, in other words, in exchange for the one escape (in the form of silence) that Crawshay offers him.   The expected standards of a law-abiding English citizen might not have been met here, but Raffles has satisfied, in his own gentlemanly style, the particular (and ambiguous) set of values he shares with the criminal Crawshay.

There is one facet of Crawshay's escape from Dartmoor, however, to which Raffles would not claim a connection; here again Raffles generates his own code, his own standard of acceptable behaviour. Raffles tells Bunny about the "outrage" Crawshay has committed "on the line near Dawlish" during the fugitive's escape from Dartmoor.

Evidently Crawshay has killed the parson there. Raffles, though criminal, has his own rather gentlemanly or even aesthetic views on the crudity of murder. "Violence is a confession of terrible incompetence," he tells Bunny. "In all these years how many blows have you known me strike? Not one, I believe" (141). Throughout these stories Raffles prides himself most on his ability to infiltrate spaces and leave without detection; the presence of a dead body, or the exertion of effort it would take to kill, appear to Raffles to be unsporting and ungentlemanly and, to Raffles's standards at least, unethical. The legal and moral codes often assumed to be in play in a civilized society would suggest that such violence would be "wrong." Raffles, with his idiosyncratic codes of conduct, seems rather to see murder as evidence of artistic failure and criminal incompetence.

In keeping with Raffles's ambiguous nature, however, those codes are shifting and pliable. After boasting to Bunny that he has not struck a blow in "all these years," Raffles adds this most menacing afterword: "But I have been quite ready to kill my man every time, if the worst came to the worst" (141). Raffles is forever a gentleman, a self-proclaimed sportsman, a generally likable fellow, but behind his sophisticated and charming façade lurks a ready violence restrained not on moral grounds, but perhaps more frighteningly on artistic or aesthetic grounds. Violence isn't "wrong" for Raffles, but rather unseemly. This once more is Raffles the monster. With his self-made code of conduct and his consummate skill in movement, disguise, and so on, he becomes the outwardly respectable gentleman on the street who might kill those around him if not for a sense of wholly subjective decorum. And more: he becomes the embodiment of the

even more threatening idea that personal violence is not necessarily incompatible with the code governing the conduct of a gentleman.

The concern that might be felt about Raffles's potential for violence is not, in this collection of stories, entirely theoretical; this darker facet of his personality is explored in "Wilful Murder." In this story, Raffles's willingness to break his own rules and for once to consider murder is occasioned by the failure of one of his most important disguises. Bunny describes a crucial facet of Raffles's criminal work, the process by which the gentleman criminal endeavors to "dispose of the plunder" (78). For a normal criminal, such a process would involve nothing more than meeting with a fence and agreeing on a price for the stolen goods. For a gentleman with a reputation to lose and thus who lives in constant fear of scandal, however, this process is more complicated. "Raffles had his own method of conducting this very vital branch of our business," Bunny reports, "which I was well content to leave entirely in his hands. He drove the bargains, I believe, in a thin but subtle disguise of the flashy-seedy order, and always in the Cockney dialect of which he had made himself a master" (78). As in his dealings with Crawshay, the upper-class Raffles proves able to lower himself on the cultural spectrum in order to deal with those supposedly beneath him. He easily masters the Cockney dialect of the working class, though neither Crawshay nor Old Baird, the "fence" Raffles uses to dispose of his stolen goods, demonstrate any ability to match Raffles's upper-class mannerisms. That is, Raffles can move along the social spectrum in ways other criminals cannot. His skill makes him socially mobile.

These working-class criminals are not without intelligence of their own, however. It is Old Baird who finally sees through Raffles's disguise: "Old Baird has at last spotted

that I'm not quite the common cracksman I would have him think me," Raffles tells

Bunny. "So he's been doing his best to run me to my burrow" (80). For Raffles, Old

Baird becomes a considerable threat; as a criminal and liminoid mover himself, that

"rascal" would presumably have the connections needed to capitalize on the forbidden

knowledge of Raffles's ambiguity. He would be free from conventional constraints of

privacy to pursue Raffles until he determines his true identity; he would be free from

conventional moral restraints to turn a profit for himself using this knowledge; he would

be free from a conventional fear of scandal – as a known criminal, he hasn't much to lose

short of his life – that would keep him from pursuing Raffles and thus associating himself

with a potential criminal (since, again, he's a criminal himself). More than the police or

other cultural authorities, Old Baird presents to Raffles a greater threat because of his

fundamental lack of scruples. It is for this reason that Raffles intends to commit his first

pre-meditated murder on the person of Old Baird.

Of course, Old Baird is a safer target for Raffles, should the latter decide actually

to commit such a serious felony. Chances are that the cultural powers-that-be, those

holding the observational power of conventional police discipline, would be less inclined

to care overmuch about the murder of a noted moneylender and criminal than they would

of, say, a policeman like McKenzie or an aristocrat like Lord Amersteth. The upper-crust

circles through which Raffles moves often prove very lucrative, but in these circles an act

of violence would bring down the whole weight of disciplinary menace on Raffles's

head. He shows gentlemanly restraint by not committing acts of violence in such circles,

but he also shows practical wisdom. On the other hand, there's considerable cultural

freedom in moving through hidden spaces not patrolled by the authorities, as Raffles and

Old Baird both move; there's added danger there, too, the type of danger than should

appeal to a sportsman, when one encounters another such liminoid mover. Both Raffles

and Old Baird seem to feel the danger inherent to their outsider positions. And Bunny

comes to share in that danger as well. On the way ostensibly to kill Old Baird, Raffles

promises to shoot Bunny should Bunny choose to interfere with Raffles's plans. "So you

come at your own peril, my dear man," he says (85)[22]. For those who operate in a sphere

beyond the scope of conventional authority, there is no protective recourse; one travels at

one's own risk, a cultural risk that might extend to the commission of murder, or a

personal risk that might lead to one being murdered.

Despite the seriousness of the stakes and the threat he issues to Bunny, Raffles

expresses considerable pleasure as he considers the thought of movement through such

unprotected places and the resulting secret knowledge one might acquire, particularly the

knowledge of the hidden crimes one has committed. In this darker story he seems to

embrace the sportsman's code – that which celebrates the biggest risk and which

privileges courage above all else – at the expense of the gentleman's code (not to mention

the legal code). "I've told you before," he says to Bunny, "that the biggest man alive is

the man who's committed murder, and not yet been found out; at least he ought to be but

he so very seldom has the soul to appreciate himself" (83). This last clause anticipates

the perceived failure of Jack Rutter, who mentally falls apart after killing Old Baird and

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[22] Bunny's response to Raffles's threat captures the paradoxical Gothic terror and
attraction to be found when the personal and cultural stakes are this high: as he
accompanies Raffles toward murder, he fears his "good intentions" to avert tragedy if
possible "were tainted with a devouring curiosity, and overlaid by the fascination which
goes hand in hand with horror" (85).

thus, in Raffles's terms, fails to appreciate his own magnitude as a murderer. Raffles

continues: "Just think of it! Think of coming here [to a club] and talking to the men,

very likely about the murder itself; and knowing you've done it; and wondering how

they'd look if they knew! Oh, it would be great, simply great!" (83).

Of course Raffles is, depending on one's perspective, either saved from or

prevented from the act of murder by circumstances beyond his control. Jack Rutter,

who's "getting himself a bad name" and "going to the bad" over drink and debt (82),

enters the liminoid sphere by killing Old Baird just before Raffles has the chance to do

the deed himself. Rutter's life in this story bears some resemblance to the life of Dorian

Gray: he descends from respectability through drink and debt into the evident need to

commit murder, a murder he undertakes to protect his reputation from Baird's damning

knowledge even as Dorian kills Basil Hallward. By committing murder, Rutter leaves

himself with two options, as Raffles explains: "There was no arguing with him; either he

must make a clean breast of it or flee the country" (93). Upon Raffles's insistence, Jack

finds freedom in disguise and movement: "So I rigged him up at the studio," Raffles tells

Bunny, "and we took the first train to Liverpool" (93). Raffles adds this further lament,

an indictment of Rutter's suitability to succeed in this liminoid sphere he's chosen:

"Nothing would induce him to sit tight and enjoy the situation as I should have

endeavored to do in his place" (93). Here again we see Raffles contrasted with another

character in order to highlight his ambiguity. He turns out not to be a killer like Rutter,

and yet he was prepared to commit murder, and he was ready also to hide that murder, to

relish the exquisiteness and enormity of the secret, and to maintain his place in society as

a gentleman in spite of the moral sanction against murder his society necessarily holds.

The gentleman, the sportsman, the famous cricketer, and the elegant thief also shows himself to have been a few seconds short of committing murder and, more frighteningly, enjoying it.

It cannot be said, however, that Raffles fully embraces this nebulous life, regardless of the miraculous skill it has taken for him to inhabit his monstrous position. Raffles carries with him an increasingly nagging ambivalence to the position he has so carefully constructed for himself; this ambivalence adds further to his complexity and unpredictability as a Gothic villain. There is a passage in "The Gift of the Emperor," the final story of this collection, that perfectly captures the degree to which Raffles is aware of his own cultural and moral ambiguity, and the degree to which he comes to lament that state. Raffles and Bunny occupy a berth on an ocean liner, ostensibly to steal a priceless pearl currently held on the ship. Bunny challenges Raffles's motives for spending so much time with the younger and seemingly unworthy Miss Amy Werner – the daughter of a wealthy squatter in one of the British colonies, she whom Bunny calls "a giddy young schoolgirl" (139). Raffles, it seems to Bunny, stands on the threshold of violating the gentleman's code by trifling with Miss Werner's affections in order to advance his criminal enterprise. Raffles, however, carries a secret desire he hides even from Bunny. "It doesn't occur to you," he says, "that I might like to draw stumps, start clean, and live happily ever after – in the bush?" (144). Beneath his façade of genteel respectability and athletic prowess, and beneath the secret artistry and accomplished criminality of the liminoid mover, there lurks within Raffles another identity, that of a man who longs to escape from both lives and to live simply, cleanly, quietly. In these last few moments of the collection of stories, Raffles seems, to Bunny and his readers, more human than

before, more reflective and perhaps regretful, more willing to leave behind this multifaceted liminoid existence he has created. He demonstrates for the first time what appears to be a code of conduct beyond those he has manipulated, a human conviction to be happy at a deeper level than any of his various cultural codes has enabled him to be.

These previously hidden inclinations might be said to foreshadow the ambiguity of what follows as "The Gift of the Emperor" comes to a close. As always, Raffles's motives and actions are difficult to categorize here. Mackenzie, in disguise of course, has come aboard the ocean liner and has brought with him warrants for the arrest of both Raffles and Bunny. Raffles confesses that he has been afraid for some weeks that Mackenzie has "been on my track," probably since he helped Crawshay escape. Together Mackenzie and the ship's captain arrest Bunny and Raffles on the deck of the ship; with a flourish Raffles produces the pearl he has stolen, confesses the crimes he's committed, and then makes two requests. First, he asks that he and Bunny not suffer the "public indignity" of being placed in irons for the remainder of the voyage, as the captain has demanded (150). This request seems in keeping both with Raffles's highly developed desire to avoid scandal as well as the dignified code of the gentlemanly station he still occupies. Second, he makes a request that seems equally dignified and gentlemanly: "Captain, I've done a worse thing aboard your ship than any of you know. I have become engaged to be married, and I want to say good-bye!" (151). Again, the request is gallant and romantic, surprising everyone and yet echoing those reflective domestic sentiments that Raffles expressed to Bunny earlier. Even in the midst of being arrested, Raffles appears at first glance to be shifting codes again, changing from the red-handed criminal to the romantic gentleman.

But then, to the bafflement of all present, and we can assume to many readers, Raffles performs his final act of this collection, one that cements his ambiguous status, one that even Bunny can't classify. Bunny writes:

> Suddenly – an instant – and the thing was done – a thing I have never known whether to admire or to detest. He caught [Miss Werner] – he kissed her before us all – then flung her from him so that she almost fell. It was that action which foretold the next. The mate sprang after him, and I sprang after the mate.
>
> Raffles was on the rail, but only just.
>
> "Hold him, Bunny!" he cried. "Hold him tight!" And as I obeyed that last behest with all my might, without a thought of what I was doing, save that he bade me to do it, I saw his hands shoot up and his head bob down, and his lithe, spare body cut the sunset as cleanly and precisely as though he had plunged at his leisure from a diver's board! (153)

Raffles, in this moment, seems to violate every conflicting code he has embraced throughout these stories. He seems absolutely ungentlemanly when he flings the girl away from him, both in the way he handles her physically and also the manner in which he uses her romantic affections to secure his own escape. He seems detestably selfish and unsporting by leaving Bunny to face the consequences of the law himself, especially given that he has drawn Bunny into this life of crime. In "The Return Match," Raffles assures Bunny that "we sink or swim together" (127); in this moment on the ocean liner, this is literally false. And if indeed Raffles has committed suicide, as everyone on board (except for Bunny) seems to assume, then he seems cowardly for, in cricket terms, giving

up his own wicket, an act he never before would have considered. The once admirable amateur cracksman seems to have abandoned all claims to esteem in these final moments.

And yet, the text does not allow such condemnation; there's a great deal of Raffles's typical ambiguity in this closing scene. After Raffles assures Bunny in "The Return Match" that their fates are tied together, Bunny expresses some fear of abandonment: "You're never going to leave me to be landed alone?" Raffles responds: "If I do, it will be to turn up trumps at the right moment […] You must trust me, Bunny; you've known me long enough" (124). This bit of foreshadowing certainly becomes relevant as Raffles leaps over the side of the ocean liner. Instead of abandoning Bunny, he might be fulfilling the role he has taken in regard to Bunny since their public school days. As we learn in the first story of the collection, Bunny fagged for Raffles, which means that Raffles was responsible to some degree for Bunny's well-being. It's possible, even in this moment of crisis, that Raffles simply follows his own coded program, that of the sporting public school gentleman. Maybe he jumps ship in order to come back to save Bunny later.

This conclusion is at once hinted at and yet challenged by the text. Bunny believes he sees Raffles's head bobbing in the waves a few miles astern, giving the reader the sense that Raffles may indeed have survived his jump. And yet Bunny also mentions the "long imprisonment" and "everlasting disgrace" he has endured as the consequence of his criminal activity with Raffles, which means that Raffles didn't exactly return to save the day (153). Is there a way, then, to spin Raffles's final act into something noble? Bunny wants to; he follows Raffles's instructions to hold the shipmate and enable Raffles's escape even when his own arrest is inevitable because he has, to this point,

believed implicitly in the codes of conduct Raffles has followed. And yet the text doesn't

exactly provide an answer to the question of Raffles's motivation. He either violated his

codes or he did not. If he did, his character is rendered even more ambiguous and

threatening, and also a good deal less admirable. If he did not violate those codes, but

instead followed them with some secret agenda to which even Bunny does not have

access, we leave these stories a bit mystified about the validity of a code that would

instruct a man to draw his friend into criminality and then to abandon him when it comes

time to pay for those crimes. The collection closes with an image of Bunny sitting in

irons and looking out the porthole of an ocean liner, maybe or maybe not seeing Raffles

bobbing in the ocean. For Bunny, and for the readers Bunny represents, the mystery of

Raffles's monstrous and complex identity is difficult to unravel to the last.

A Concluding Note on the Text

I have confined my analysis of Raffles's cultural ambiguity to Hornung's first

collection of Raffles stories, *The Amateur Cracksman*, published in 1899. The success of

these stories led to a second collection, called *The Black Mask* or, in some countries,

Further Adventures of the Amateur Cracksman, in 1901[23]. These two collections have

been sometimes published together under the title of the first collection (this is the format

of the Wordsworth Classics edition currently before me), though a fundamental

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[23] This second collection contains the following: "No Sinecure," "A Jubilee Present," "The Fate of Faustina," "The Last Laugh," "To Catch a Thief," "An Old Flame," "The Wrong House," and "The Knees of the Gods."

difference in the cultural codes in play in these two collections requires, I believe, a separate theoretical treatment. Hence the focus of this chapter.

The final story of the first collection ends with the *supposed* death of Raffles and the imprisonment of Bunny, as discussed above. Until he disappears into the ocean, Raffles has led, as I've said, a multiform life as a famous cricketer, a gentleman, a public school man, and a thief. He has embodied the various codes inherent to these cultural positions; he has moved between them and combined them as needed to pursue his criminal ends while also maintaining his respectability. His greatest fear is exposure; his criminal success depends heavily on the degree to which his respectable appearance and fame deflect suspicion from his moral and cultural standing. Because his coded appearance in society and his notoriety as a cricketer necessarily indicate gentility, in other words, Raffles maintains a visible presence in society so that attention might be drawn away from whatever secret endeavors he might choose to undertake. His greatest disguise is to be seen as himself, a tactic also employed in the fiction of this time by Dorian Gray and Dr. Jekyll. And his greatest cultural impact, like Gray and Jekyll, is the manner in which he masks his criminal menace behind evident outward respectability. If one cannot rely on such outwardly distinguished gentlemen as Raffles, Dr. Jekyll, and Dorian Gray for a preservation of cultural order, whom can one trust?

After Raffles's disappearance in "The Gift of the Emperor," however, Raffles changes his liminoid strategy. We learn in the opening story of *The Black Mask*, a tale called "No Sinecure," that Raffles has survived his ordeal at sea and has returned by a circuitous route to London. Here he maintains an identity as an Australian invalid, a shut-in who needs a male attendant and caregiver. Enter the intrepid Bunny, a man who

has recently been released from prison and now attempts to live an honest life under the mistaken belief that Raffles is indeed dead. Bunny answers the disguised Raffles's advertisement for a caregiver; the two thieves are soon reunited. But it is at this point that the Raffles adopts a new liminoid strategy and a new code of behavior. Of course his greatest fear is still exposure, for a prison cell certainly awaits him if he turns up alive. To avoid such exposure, however, he must now appear in society only in disguise. He can no longer hide in plain sight as a gentleman, as do Dorian Gray and Dr. Jekyll. He can no longer live the visible life of the famous cricketer A.J. Raffles, with all of the protection and moral/ethical/social standing necessarily coded into that identity. And, therefore, as concerns this project, he can no longer embody that most disturbing social presence: the respectable man whose spotless gentility masks incongruous depravity. His cultural position in *The Black Mask* is simply that of a thief in hiding. He lives now according to the criminal code alone.

For a city the size of London at the turn of the 20th century, the idea of thief in hiding presents no real Gothic sense of foreboding. Of course London contains thieves in hiding, a contemporary reader might say. That's why we have police. The stories in the second collection therefore fail to provide the cultural commentary found in *The Amateur Cracksman*. It is a far more threatening notion to suggest to readers that the villains they fear are not confined to the darkest alleys and twisted thoroughfares the intersect the parts of London into which those readers never venture, but rather that those villains move freely through even the highest levels of respectable society. Because of his multifaceted personality, and particularly because of his gentility and outward respectability, Raffles (in the first collection) seems to challenge the very notions the culture of Victorian

London relies on to categorize its citizens. For a culture that places value on gentlemanly bearing, wealth, athletic prowess, and a public school education, Raffles embodies all that might be wrong with those values. He does not challenge the categories themselves, of course, but rather shows the frightening criminal potential that might be hidden by such superficial and reductive cultural categories. He is, in those early stories, a code-switching monster, as true a cultural menace as can be found in the fiction of this period.

CHAPTER 4

Towards a More Inclusive Britishness: Richard Hannay's Transformative Connections
and Evolving Identity in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

In chapter 2 of this project, I discussed the cultural threat posed by Sherlock

Holmes's communitas – his liminal connection – with the villain Stapleton. A hero who

aligns himself so closely with a criminal, both in tactics employed and in liminal space

occupied, presents a fundamental danger to the disciplinary society charged with keeping

its citizens in line because the hero temporarily crosses that line and thus can only be

trusted (because he cannot be coerced) to uphold law and order. Regardless of Holmes's

upstanding conduct, he nevertheless demonstrates the ability to work in the criminal

realm; there is nothing other than Holmes's own sense of honor or duty, both

abstractions, that would keep Holmes from becoming a criminal like Raffles or even like

Stapleton himself. Holmes's determination to adopt Stapleton's villainous tactics of

disguise and invasion and to defeat Stapleton at his own game, I argued, save the day for

England and yet serve to taint Holmes's cultural standing in the very society he seeks to

protect.

In John Buchan's thriller *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, we again see the tainting

influence of communitas between a hero and the villains he combats. In this novel,

however, we see that communitas deployed to ask different cultural questions than those

asked by Doyle's novel. Because Buchan's hero Richard Hannay spent most of his

formative years on the African continent, and because he works in this novel as an

amateur spy who uses his colonial veldcraft to defeat Germans who use similar tactics, the novel calls into question on an international scale the permeability of cultural barriers separating the British from the Other as well as the domestic cultural barriers used to define Britishness itself. In this chapter I will explore the challenges presented to these barriers, particularly as Hannay is transformed into a cultural menace by his liminal alliances and then as he and the Germans defy visual assessment through disguise and engage in similar tactics of espionage in order to advance their respective agendas. As we shall see, Buchan's Gothic-infused text asks readers to confront that most threatening of suggestions: that Britishness itself is a construction of convenience, and even perhaps a rationale for imperial rule, that holds no essential moral and philosophical permanence.

The closing scenes of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* depict the well-orchestrated deployment of governmental police power against an enemy of the state. Safely ensconced in London, the seat of official power, a group of political and military authorities dispatch to Kent a force of highly-trained police in order to surround and apprehend the disguised members of a German spy ring. The authorities in their London headquarters await reports from the agents in the field as those agents seek to neutralize the threat to national security posed by these spies. Foucault would characterize this deployment as the state's active response to an "exceptional situation," a scenario in which the ever-present official gaze of the disciplinary state is insufficient to combat a specific social or cultural threat. The men in power sit at the center of power and wait for their deputies to exercise that power. It is a predictable scenario.

Or rather, the scene would be predictable but for two notable exceptions. One is the presence of Richard Hannay, the story's narrator, a Scottish civilian who spent most

of his adult life to this point as a mining engineer in Rhodesia and South Africa. The

other is the respectable, dyed-in-the-wool Britishness outwardly evident in the alleged

villains, the three men who play tennis and golf, who speak in perfect British accents,

who occupy the patriotically-named Trafalgar Lodge and fly on their flagstaff "an

enormous Union Jack" (99). The unpredictability of the scene extends further to

Hannay's role in this moment: not only is he present on the scene, he's leading the police

forces deployed to take down these seemingly prototypical British citizens. Though he

has been recently (and unofficially) deputized by the governmental authorities, Hannay

has never been part of the state's police force; he has no governmental position or legal

standing to participate in this otherwise official police business. His only qualification to

lead this deployment of official power is that he, alone among the governmental forces

deployed on this night, has previously come face-to-face with this particular enemy. As

Christopher Harvie observes, Hannay had to work with, and on behalf of, "a not-

altogether-competent establishment" which had to "cope with the catastrophe of total

war" (ix). A key facet of this total war is the use of disguise and the subsequent

unsuspected invasion of the country accomplished by stealthy foreign agents. Hannay

therefore must lead this charge because he alone has shared combative space with the

German spies and thus has the best chance of anyone to see through their artful disguises

and identify the threat they pose to Great Britain. He has also shared their tactics – he is

nearly as masterful at disguise, surveillance, and mobility as they are. He understands

their strategies, and potentially their weaknesses, because he shares them.

As I've discussed elsewhere in this project, Victor Turner observes that those who

spend time together in the liminal realm necessarily develop a connection with each

other, a *communitas*, that cannot be forged except under liminal conditions. Turner

contends in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* that "[t]he bonds of communitas are anti-

structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant,

nonrational" and "not shaped by norms[24]" (274). This connection is for Turner a positive

outcome of shared liminal space; he argues that communitas wipes away all national,

socio-cultural, religious, and class-based stratifications and allows those who have shared

liminal space to forge a connection based solely on shared experience. Like Chaucer's

pilgrims, those who share liminal space become for a time cultural equals who experience

similar events and hardships and rewards and who are therefore forever linked by a bond

not shared by those who were not present. This bond, to Turner, is an enriching bond.

In Buchan's text, however, that enrichment is a bit complicated. It is true, as I

will show, that Hannay forges enriching and transformative liminal bonds with characters

like Sir Harry, Walter Bullivant, and even the soon-to-be deceased Scudder; these "good-

guy" connections quickly forged in the liminal space of combat serve to protect Hannay

and to further his ultimate project even as they transform him into a cultural force equal

to his invading enemies. Hannay's bond with these villainous Germans, however, proves

to be the decisive connection in this story. Hannay seeks to use his bond with the

Germans not as a way to forge an enriching connection with them, but rather as a way to

beat them at their own game. Theirs is a combative communitas, as was the connection

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[24] That is to say, the bonds of communitas are not shaped by the norms that govern non-liminal (or everyday) interactions. It would be difficult to posit a completely norm-less relational realm, nor do I believe Turner has such a realm in mind. In the context of Turner's comment, he certainly implies that the bonds of communitas operate according to their own set of norms; indeed his discussion of communitas posits the norms by which such liminal connections operate.

between Holmes and Stapleton. Though both Hannay and Holmes share common liminal space and combative tactics with their respective opponents, and though both come begrudgingly to admire the abilities and dedication of their adversaries, both heroes draw close to their enemies in order to apprehend them. Both are also tainted by this connection.[25] Because of his role in the grand scheme of the Germans' plan, Hannay is framed for murder and is subsequently depicted in the British press as a murderer and a fugitive; he is sought by the police and the Germans alike for his role in this drama. He also finds himself forced to assume other identities, to engage in subterfuge and intimidation, and even to resort to theft, all of which could serve to undermine Hannay's status as a law-abiding citizen. But beyond their common tactics and potential criminality, Hannay shares something with the Germans that even Holmes does not share with Stapleton: he shares a perpetual outsider status with them. Both carry with them the taint of foreignness; their tactics of disguise and surveillance resonate with the exotic, the fundamentally un-British. Though he works on behalf of Britain against a foreign aggressor, Hannay as a returned colonial (and a native Scotsman) never fully enjoys a complete aggregation into the English culture he works to defend.

Because of Hannay's exhilarating combat with these German invaders, because of the exciting chase scenes as well as the secret codes and the frequent use of disguise, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* has been classified both as a spy novel and an adventure novel[26].

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[25] Please see the concluding section of Chapter 2 for my discussion of the cultural taint attached to Holmes because of his connection to Stapleton.

[26] For example: Robin Winks calls Buchan "the father of the modern spy thriller," though Winks acknowledges that "the Hannay books are not, strictly speaking, about spies at all in the professional sense of the word" (xi). Meanwhile, Martin Green (in

Scholars have yet to assess, however, the infusion of the Gothic into this text or the

difficulty of categorizing the story's narrator, Richard Hannay, particularly as Hannay

finds himself so closely connected to his fellow-outsiders, his German enemies. In my

reading, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* has an unmistakable flavor of the Gothic – manifested

most urgently in the ambiguous identities of the main characters and the shadowy cultural

threat hovering at the edges of the story – and indeed qualifies as an example of what

Patrick Brantlinger calls the "imperial Gothic," though the text serves to complicate the

narrative force of the reverse-invasion story usually referred to by Brantlinger's label.

Certainly there are anxieties about invasion from without in Buchan's novel as the

Germans infiltrate Great Britain. But rather than gritty English resolution coming to the

rescue, as is often the case in imperial Gothic novels (such as those by Haggard or Wells,

for example), the English in Buchan's text are saved by someone else, an outsider, a

Scotsman who returns to Britain via southern Africa. And further, as I will show, they

are saved by this man using the very same techniques the Germans used to invade the

country to begin with. There is fear here of the invasion of England; the German

invasion certainly calls into question the defensive barriers that surround Great Britain.

Hannay's participation in this combat, however, provides a more intimate and threatening

challenge to the many internal barriers, the parameters of Britishness, constructed within

the society he helps to preserve. In a sense, his boundary-crossing is more disturbing

than the unsurprising (from an English point of view) monstrosity of the German

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Seven Types of Adventure Tale) classifies *The Thirty-Nine Steps* as a "Hunted Man" type
of adventure novel, deriving its suspense as it does from the travails of an admirable hero
being chased by evil, nation-threatening enemies (189).

aggressors. The imperial Gothic in this text, and more broadly the Gothic as a "mode" of writing, to borrow Robert Mighall's term,[27] concerns itself with the dissolution of boundaries. This is not necessarily a novel, as it is sometimes read, that reinforces England's imperial supremacy. It is rather a novel that investigates the fluidity and permeability of the barriers that separate that which is considered essentially British from that which is considered essentially foreign or undesirable.

As I will show in this chapter, therefore, Hannay's communitas with the German spies generates at once Hannay's qualification to defeat the Germans as well as the cultural taint and Gothic uncertainty that render Hannay (as well as his enemies) ambiguous and potentially menacing. As such, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* adds to the late-Victorian conception of Britain as vulnerable to invasion and raises the culturally disturbing notion that the British might have to adopt the tactics of their foreign enemies – indeed, might have to embrace the ways of the Other – in order to repel those same enemies. Hannay and his Foreign Office friend do eventually repel the German invasion in this novel, and yet the permeability of the nation's forces of defense is not permanently repaired, rendering the invasions of the German's successful at least in a cultural sense. The novel also poses the question of who might be considered British, and thus by

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[27] Mighall draws a distinction between the "genre" of the Gothic, which encompasses the stories built around the conventions (crumbling castles, labyrinths, secret passageways, mistaken identity) upon which the literary Gothic was founded, and the "mode" of Gothic writing, which focuses more on the ambiguity, menace, and terror generated within a text than on the props used to generate those effects. Mighall's distinction allows for a discussion of an infusion of Gothic themes into a text like *The Thirty-Nine Steps* that, especially when contrasted to contemporary novels like *Dracula*, is not necessarily Gothic by genre.

extension poses more disturbing questions about who might rightly be governed, and on what grounds, in what Brantlinger calls "the narrowing vistas of the British Empire" (250). Buchan, writing near the beginning of the Great War – a cultural force already muddying easy Victorian distinctions – effectively complicates the self and other, Us and Them, good guy and bad guy dichotomies that form the foundation of so much late-Victorian imperial thinking.

Before discussing the Gothic-driven destabilization of (physical and cultural) barriers in this text, however, it is necessary first to examine the parameters and logistics of the various liminal connections Hannay forges during his journey – with his allies and his enemies alike – as well as the degree to which Hannay is transformed into both a hero and a monster by these connections. In particular I will explore the manner in which both Hannay and the Germans manipulate the visual matrix (which I define here as the system of visible markers used to establish or assess identity) governing the connections they make in the liminal realm of battle. Because of their shared expertise in disguise, shared mobility and isolation, and eventual face-to-face contact, Hannay is as closely united with his enemies as he is with any of his allies. And it is this union that facilitates Hannay's victory over the German spies, however culturally compromising that union might be. He wins the contest because to a threatening degree he becomes very much like the enemies he combats.

Spontaneous Communitas: Manipulating the Visual Matrix

In labeling *The Thirty-Nine Steps* as an imperial Gothic novel, as I have done, it is not my intention to deny its simultaneous classification (and cultural import) as an

adventure novel. Indeed, one cannot read Hannay's narration of his breakneck journey

through the lush Scottish landscape without catching echoes of the adventure tales of

Stevenson or Scott (two of Buchan's literary idols). Beyond the excitement of the tale,

though, Buchan's novel draws a portrait of what it might look like for a hero to move

outside the confines of his social position. Martin Green describes the adventure tale as

"a series of events that outrage civilized or domestic morality and that challenge those to

whom those events happen *to make use of powers that civil life forbids to the ordinary*

citizen" (*The Adventurous Male* 4; my emphasis). We can certainly see in Hannay's

adventure an illustration of this description. A murder is committed in his flat, initiating

a series of events that demand of Hannay the use of powers (secret surveillance, the

resistance of arrest, thievery, and so on) normally forbidden to or not needed by citizens

of a civilized society. Hannay does his most important work off the legal-disciplinary

grid by making use of these powers. His actions, according to Green's definition, reflect

a set of generic conventions; Hannay becomes a prototypical adventure hero, a free agent

on a quest only he can fulfill.

My concern here, though, goes beyond such classification. Because Hannay

moves off the grid, and because he does so by his own volition and through the

manipulation of his visual appearance, he embodies a mobile and potentially menacing

form of ambiguity. He becomes a Gothic presence in his own right by embracing this

ambiguity and using it for his own ends. By subterfuge he constructs for himself a

liminal space through which he moves as a liminoid hero and in doing so he

paradoxically qualifies himself to combat the other mobile menace in this text – the

German spies – even as he transgresses for a time the values of the culture he hopes to

defend.   As Yumna Siddiqi observes, Hannay "goes into enemy territory and assumes an identity that will give him access to the very heart and mind of the rebel. From this position of intimacy, and with the help of luck and intuition, he seeks to foil the insurgent's plans. In so doing, he tarries so closely with the position of the Other that he risks a crisis of identity" (121). Part of this contested identity involves being labeled a murderer; for the first half of the novel, Hannay is wanted by a police force anxious, as Brantlinger would put it, to avoid the "atavistic" notion of a murderer running free through a civilized society. Hannay embodies a Gothic moment in which his society inverts itself: its most urgent cultural value in this moment is to capture the innocent Hannay (though they don't know he's innocent), a move which will allow those who are guilty of murder and who are planning even grander crimes to go free. Hannay's decision to escape via disguise, and thus to create a mobile liminal space for himself, should therefore be seen as a temporary transgression of his culture's values in the name of a personal transformation (from passive citizen to patriotic combatant). Hannay is an adventure hero, therefore, but in earning that title he also embodies a more dynamic cultural force as the tainted liminoid outsider who saves the kingdom.

Victor Turner's notions of liminality and communitas provide a useful way to understand Hannay's mobile cultural position, in large part because at the beginning of the novel Hannay stands in need of an initiation into the society he ultimately works to save. For Turner the liminal process is primarily a rite of passage; prior to their liminal experience, young initiates in the tribal cultures Turner studied found themselves not wholly accepted into their respective tribes. They did not, in a manner of speaking, fit in. We see this same outsidership, and this same desire to belong, in the colonial Scotsman

Hannay prior to his entry into liminal battle. In the first paragraph of his narration, Hannay says that by coming to London he "got into the wrong ditch" and that he "had better climb out" (7). This metaphor, evocative perhaps of the stagnation of the trench warfare common in World War I, and certainly familiar to the soldiers in the field said to have read and enjoyed this novel[28], calls to mind the barriers that rise up on either side of conventional urban life. Hannay explains in the next paragraph that he has made his money in the colonies and had planned to spend the rest of his days in England; after three months in "the Old Country," however, he discovers that conventional life in the urban center was rather stultifying: "The weather made me liverish, the talk of the ordinary Englishman made me sick, I couldn't get enough exercise, and the amusements of London seemed as flat as soda-water that has been standing in the sun" (7). In other words, he feels like he doesn't belong in London and finds his options for stimulation and movement limited on all sides, rather like living in a ditch.

Hannay therefore finds a kind of dark pleasure in the prospect of crossing boundaries, of leaving behind the *ennui* and indeed the identity crisis that marked his life in London and engaging in this liminoid contest: "It was going to be a giddy hunt, and it was queer how the prospect comforted me. I had been slack so long that almost any chance of activity was welcome. When I had to sit alone with that corpse and wait on

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[28] Christopher Harvie quotes a letter from G.G. Hardy, a soldier in the trenches of World War I who wrote to Buchan's publisher Blackwood to share his impressions of the novel. "The shocker arrived just before dinner-time," Hardy writes, "and though with our early rising, sleep is very precious to us, I lay awake in my dug-out till I had finished the last page. This, I take it, is the supreme test of a 'shocker', one should never be able to lay it down. It is just the kind of fiction for here. […] The story is greatly appreciated in the midst of the mud and rain and shells, and all that could make trench life depressing" (xx).

Fortune I was no better than a crushed worm, but if my neck's safety was to hang on my own wits I was prepared to be cheerful about it" (20-21). Rather than relying on the conventional modes of governmental investigation to prove his innocence and to determine the validity of Scudder's claims, Hannay rather happily (and also by necessity, as he argues) enters the liminal, mobile space of contest. More importantly, as he assumes the mantle of liminoid mover, he takes the first steps toward constructing for himself an identity in his new country. It is ironic perhaps that his new identity begins with disguise, but by masking his appearance he seeks to shed some of the outsider status – his Scottish heritage and colonial upbringing – that prevents his assimilation into life in London. In building an identity through subterfuge, however, he participates just as much as his German enemies in the breakdown of cultural barriers, particularly those boundaries, as we shall see, between private space and public concern.

Once he chooses to leave his stagnant life and seek his identity through liminal movement, Hannay's transformative journey through Scotland and England matches perfectly Turner's description of the three stages of a liminal experience. The first of Turner's three stages, the initial separation from structured society, takes place via disguise shortly after the murder of Scudder in Hannay's apartment. Hannay realizes almost immediately that he has been permanently marked by his contact with Scudder. While planning his next moves, and while still in the presence of Scudder's murdered body, Hannay comes to an important realization, a moment of clarity that drives much of the plot of this novel: that he will receive no protection from the country's disciplinary legal system, and indeed that he has been essentially divorced from that system. "Supposing I went out now and called in the police," he says. "What kind of a story was I

to tell about Scudder? […] If I made a clean breast of it and told the police everything head had told me, they would simply laugh at me. The odds were a thousand to one that I would be charged with the murder, and the circumstantial evidence was strong enough to hang me." He concludes that his sudden criminality in the eyes of the police was just what his enemies had aimed for. "They were clever enough for anything," he laments, "and an English prison was a good a way of getting rid of me till after June 15th as a knife in my chest" (19-20). Hannay thus concludes that he occupies an unenviable position: he's stuck between an enemy he must combat, because of the secret knowledge he possesses and because of the enormous international stakes involved in the game, and the police who will not believe his story and who will necessarily lock him up, depriving him of his mobility and thus his ability to fight this type of battle. His essential innocence on all counts would be irrelevant; he's stuck in the middle, guilty by association in the eyes of both parties, and thus must launch out on his own: "It took me an hour or two to think this out, and by that time I had come to a decision. I must vanish somehow, and keep vanished till the end of the second week in June. Then I must somehow find a way to get in touch with the Government people and tell them what Scudder had told me" (20). After this moment of decision, and a few hours to make plans, Hannay contrives to borrow his milkman's clothes and to escape his flat in disguise. From this point, he has left the bounds of his structured society and has entered a realm in which, as Turner would have it, he has "a certain freedom to juggle with the factors of [his own] existence" (The Forest of Symbols 106). This separation represents Hannay's entry into the first stage of the liminal experience.

Jumping ahead for a moment, the third stage of the liminal experience, the officially recognized reassimilation into structured society, serves to reverse this initial separation and to bookend the middle stage, the time spent in the liminal space (which I'll discuss in a moment). Because he has a double-mission of evading the police and combating the Germans, Hannay actually has two moments of reentry into structured society. The first takes place when he meets Sir Walter Bullivant, the head of the nation's secret spy network, on a small bridge over a stream near Artinswell and is soon welcomed into that eminent man's country home and his confidence. Sir Walter arranges for Hannay to be officially cleared of the suspicion of murder by Scotland Yard officials, after which he tells Hannay essentially to go home because his part in the battle is over. "You had better lie low," Sir Walter tells him, "for if one of your Black Stone friends saw you there might be trouble" (85). With this official dismissal, Hannay's legal troubles are over and he is free to return to his normal life. He has, in other words, been welcomed back from the liminal space and is once more a member of his structured society.

And yet, for Hannay, because of the knowledge he has gained in the liminal space, this first reassimilation is not enough. Shortly after his dismissal from Bullivant, he says:

> I felt that great things, tremendous things, were happening or about
> to happen, and I, who was the cog-wheel of the whole business,
> was out of it. […] I felt the sense of danger and impending
> calamity, and I had the curious feeling, too, that I alone could avert
> it, alone could grapple with it. But I was out of the game now.
> How could it be otherwise? It was not likely that Cabinet

Ministers and Admiralty Lords and Generals would admit me to

their counsels. (85-6)

Despite the expertise he has gained in the field, and indeed the identity he has begun to

form as a cultural defender ("the cog-wheel of the whole business"), Hannay finds

himself not quite qualified to participate fully in the "great things, tremendous things"

that were about to happen. The impulse to act, that which sent Hannay into the initial

stage of liminal combat, spurs him on here.   Spurred on by his own foreboding of the

German menace and also by his desire to embody his new cultural position as defender of

the nation, Hannay once more moves out of his prescribed disciplinary parameters and

interjects himself into the presence of the "Ministers and Admiralty Lords and Generals"

who would not have invited his help. This move in effect prolongs his participation in

this liminal battle. After finally defeating the Germans (more on this below), Hannay

once again seeks reassimilation, this time by volunteering for service in the British army

as the country entered the Great War. Hannay sees joining the army, though, not as the

beginning of his service, but in some ways as the end of one chapter of his heroism: "I

had done my best service," he says in the closing lines of the novel, "before I put on

khaki" (111). David Stafford characterizes Hannay's closing lines as a bit of "false

modesty" because of the "flippant assumption that war would consist of little more than

putting on khaki" (6). Stafford overlooks, though, the significance both of the work

Hannay has done to this point and the symbolism attached to putting on the uniform of

the British army. His work has been important to this point because, acting as a lone

liminal agent, he has engaged and then defeated the enemy on grounds not available to

those in uniform. At the same time, Hannay's decision to enlist, taken together with his

early dissatisfaction when dismissed by Sir Walter and the general ennui he expresses at the opening of the novel, indicates that Hannay cannot accept a role as a civilian Englishman in England. For all of his heroism, Hannay never fully sheds his colonialism or his Scottishness; he never becomes naturally or fully English. His donning of the uniform therefore represents his best avenue to return to the civilization he has recently threatened from the liminal space in which he alone could confront the Germans. As Turner suggests, such a return is mandatory; time in the liminal realm is by definition temporary, while the return to a structured society (in the case of the army, a *highly* structured society) should mitigate the potential menace attached to someone with liminoid freedom. Hannay will now become a small player in the much larger institutionalized British military force, one of the many thousands of Britons who, instead of donning disguises and moving independently as Hannay has done before, will reflect the control exerted on them by dressing the same and going where they are ordered. Because the work he did before donning the uniform was individual work that only he could perform, though, his modesty is not false in suggesting that his best work was indeed done before joining the army.

So much for the first and third stages of the liminal process. Between Hannay's initial separation from society and his eventual reassimilation lies the section of his liminal journey most crucial to my study here. From the moment Hannay leaves his Portland Place flat disguised as the milkman, he carries his liminality with him, which means that he operates according to a different set of cultural norms even as he moves among people who inhabit the disciplinary grid of their conventional social structure. If we posit the police as the physical embodiment of the disciplinary structure, then Hannay

becomes the physical embodiment of unconventionality and thus an inherent threat to the

stability of the disciplinary grid. As long as he is on the run, Hannay like any other

fugitive embodies a literal violation of the desire of the legal structure of his culture and,

technically, taints all of his liminal companions with "accessory after the fact" status

while he's at it. Part of Hannay's potential menace is that the vortex of unconventional

cultural norms he inhabits actually moves around with him and seemingly sucks other

people in.

The liminal menace he carries with him, however, does not stop Hannay from

forging spontaneous connections with those around him. Turner writes in *The Ritual*

Process that he has "tried to eschew the notion that communitas has a specific territorial

locus, often limited in character, which pervades many definitions. For me, communitas

emerges where social structure is not" (126). Indeed, Hannay's time in the liminal space

is marked, as Turner suggests it should be, by a series of connections between Hannay

and those who temporarily share the liminal space with him, or more accurately, those

whom Hannay draws into his own liminal space. Though Hannay's communitas with the

Germans, as I explore below, is the crucial component of this novel, Hannay's journey

through Scotland and England is delineated by a series of liminal connections, each of

which lead Hannay inexorably toward his confrontation with the Germans and at the

same time instill in him the strategies of identity manipulation at play in that

confrontation. Buchan, in fact, calls attention to these liminal relationships by naming

chapter 1 and chapters 3-6 after the characters with whom Hannay so closely and quickly

connects: in addition to Hannay's first meeting with the his main German adversary (the

"Bald Archaeologist, chapter 6), we also see mentioned Scudder ("The Man who Died,"

chapter 1), the otherwise-unnamed literary innkeeper (chapter 3), Sir Harry (the "Radical Candidate," chapter 4), and Alexander Turnbull (the "Spectacled Roadman, chapter 5). Through this series of encounters, we see Hannay transformed from a man in the grips of *ennui*, as he was at the beginning of the novel, to a man capable of saving the kingdom and at the same time monstrous enough to permeate the kingdom's cultural boundaries in the process. More specifically, we witness Hannay as he progressively becomes more skillful in the manipulation of the visual matrix, a skill he'll need as he battles the Germans. The text at this point in the novel seems invested in defining this matrix so that later, in his connection with the Germans, we can better understand how both Hannay and the Germans undermine this matrix. We first see demonstrated the act of visual assessment as it is generally deployed, in other words, followed later by the subversion of that same system of visual assessment.

Before I examine these connections in detail, it will be useful briefly to characterize Hannay's connections according to a specific application of Turner's notion of communitas. The liminal relationships Hannay establishes on his journey all can be said to participate in the modality of social relationship Turner calls "spontaneous" or "existential" communitas. In *The Ritual Process*, Turner defines spontaneous communitas as a "direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities" (132). This relationship "arises in instant mutuality" between "total and concrete persons," not character types or people relying on social designations for definition. It is the immediacy and totality of this connection that sets it apart from the other liminal connections I've studied in this project. It is not, therefore, a slowly-building relationship as that between Raffles and Bunny or even, as we've seen between Holmes and the

villain Stapleton, a multi-stage progression of ever-deepening and intertwined combat. The spontaneous connection, Turner continues, "has something 'magical' about it" (139), in that it arises quickly and engrosses immediately. And because the connection is quick, it is often inspired almost exclusively by an initial visual assessment[29] between the parties. This of course subjects the connection to the type of visual manipulation at which both Hannay and the Germans become so skillful.

The importance of visual assessment to these relationships becomes evident in the initial connection between Hannay and Scudder. Here the startling immediacy of trust underscores the intensity of these liminal connections. When Scudder first enters Hannay's flat, he does so with this explanation: "'I'm very sorry,' he said humbly. 'It's a mighty liberty, but you looked like the kind of man who would understand" (9). Hannay, in Scudder's view, carries with him an air of action. He continues: "Say, sir, I've been watching you, and I reckon you're a cool customer. I reckon, too, you're an honest man, and not afraid of playing a bold hand" (9). What's most striking about Scudder's external

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[29] My discussion here of visual assessment can be traced to Turner's notion, in *The Forest of Symbols*, that as members of a structured society, "most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture" (95). This conception of "seeing" renders those in the liminal process menacing to those not involved in the process because by definition the liminal movers, when they can be seen physically, defy visual cultural classification; Turner writes that "subject of passage ritual is, in the liminal period, structurally, if not physically, 'invisible'" to those not involved in the liminal journey (95). At the same time, those who occupy the liminal spaces I've described in this text are at pains to assess quickly and accurately the cultural "classifications" of those they encounter on their liminal journeys in order to make the connections needed to further these journeys. Turner's words posit "seeing" as the way we are conditioned to make such assessments and connections.

assessment of Hannay's character is not only that he proves to be correct – Hannay does indeed have these characteristics – but more importantly that these perceived characteristics are enough for Scudder, in his moment of desperation, to trust Hannay immediately. Theirs is a spontaneous communitas based almost solely on visual assessment, an assessment made possible in part because Hannay acts only as himself here; because he does not know Scudder will approach him, nor does he know at this point in the text that any "game is afoot," as Holmes might say, Hannay acts without disguise or subterfuge. He is still, at this point in the text, the colonial Scotsman who does not fit in fully in London. What he learns in this moment is his vulnerability to (potentially unwanted or dangerous) connection when seen in his own guise. Scudder feels compelled, in this time of crisis, to trust in the qualities outwardly evident in Hannay's character to such an extent that in a sense he violates Hannay's private space and drags Hannay into this adventure. This will be the only time, until he turns his knowledge over to Sir Walter, that Hannay appears as undisguised as his colonial-Scottish self. For the remainder of his journey he employs increasingly careful disguises to preserve his safety, to mask his outsidership, and to establish an identity suitable for his passage through contested liminal space.

Despite his employment of disguise, however, Hannay's bearing still invites the open (though not always perfectly honest, as we shall see) and somehow intimate give and take required to form these connections.   The literary innkeeper provides a good case in point here. Hannay, disguised now in a traveler's flannels, presents to the young man a rather romanticized version of himself; he begins at this stage to distance his assumed identity from his "true" self and to transform into the man who ultimately will face the

Germans. After an initial visual assessment, he and the innkeeper establish their connection through an exchange of stories that, to some degree, become confessions. The young innkeeper, who holds in his hands a copy of *Paradise Lost*, confesses to Hannay, with a blush, that he would prefer to "write books" over tending his inn (32). This secret seems to embarrass the innkeeper, lending to his bearing the openness needed for an existential connection. Hannay, who had begun "to detect an ally" in part because of his visual assessment of the innkeeper's "pleasant sunburnt boyish face" (31-32), then tells the young man his man-on-the-run story, in this case an embellished tale that was "true in essentials" but true enough to show the innkeeper than indeed a bit of adventure had landed at his doorstep. And this in turn leads to the connection between the two men, which is consummated by the innkeeper offering his hospitality in exchange for "more material about your adventures" (33). David Daniell argues that this encounter forms the hinge of the book in that here Hannay discovers the true nature of the forces arrayed against him (Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, note 31). I would argue that the true turning point in the book comes later, when Hannay first encounters in person the leader of the German spies. This moment with the innkeeper serves as a milestone, though, in Hannay's journey, principally because for the first time after Scudder's death Hannay forges a liminal connection, a moment of spontaneous communitas, with an ally in the contested space of this battle[30], and also because Hannay has begun to manipulate his

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[30] Calling his encounter with the innkeeper his "first" connection on his journey is a bit misleading. Before meeting the innkeeper, Hannay spends the night the first night of his Scottish travels under the hospitality of a herdsman and his wife in their cottage "set in a nook beside a waterfall." This unnamed couple provides Hannay with the "bed in the loft" and "a hearty meal of ham and eggs, scones, and thick sweet milk" (27). Hannay

appearance and persona to connect with his audience at any given moment. His identity

here becomes more pliable; he chooses his disguise in order to emphasize the most useful

parts of himself. He perceived quickly that the young man was thirsting for adventure, so

Hannay (to further his own ends) gives the young man what he was hoping to find.

Hannay's later connection with Sir Harry is similarly built on visual assessment

and the crafting of persona. Once more he assumes an identity designed to fit the

particular cultural and rhetorical situation in which he finds himself and in doing so

manipulates how he is seen. In this case, Hannay poses not as a romantic traveler, but as

a rather awkward and self-effacing colonial. After their near car accident, Sir Harry asks

Hannay where his "kit" is so that he might carry Hannay and his bags to his own house.

Hannay replies that his kit is in his pocket because "I'm a Colonial and travel light" (41),

a response that carries the ring of truth to it because he is in fact a Colonial but which

shields the truth that he travels light because he is in fact on the run. Hannay then carries

this persona further by claiming to be a Free Trader, a political position he knows nothing

about but which clearly excites Sir Harry, who says, "By Gad, you're the very man I've

been praying for" (41). It is only after taking his persona as far as it can go by bailing Sir

Harry out of a jam by giving a speech for him at the political rally – an impromptu speech

based again on his fabricated political expertise – that Hannay decides to share his story

(he's a man on the run) with Sir Harry. He makes himself vulnerable to this man because

connection here, though, is more in keeping with the hospitality traditionally extended in these parts to travelers and less in keeping with the type of communitas I'm exploring here. Hannay reports that the couple "asked no questions, for they had the perfect breeding of all dwellers in the wilds," and that they refused payment (27). They serve more as hosts than allies for Hannay. For these reasons, I label the innkeeper as Hannay's first connection.

of their brief shared experience and because, as he says, "I saw by this man's eye that he was the kind you can trust" (45). He feels a connection with Sir Harry that has little to do with Hannay's Colonial persona and much more to do with the visual assessment of Sir Harry's character. When Hannay has finished his story, he informs Sir Harry that, legally, the latter should inform the police that the Portland Place murderer is sitting in his house. In response, Sir Harry says to Hannay, "I may be an ass on the [political] platform, but I can size up a man. You're no murderer and you're no fool, and I believe you are speaking the truth. I'm going to back you up" (46). As with the literary innkeeper, Hannay finds immediate trust, and a moment of communitas, with a relative stranger based on visual assessment. The emphasis here on persona and visual assessment serves once more to highlight the mechanism by which the Victorian culture of surveillance operates, and thus the means by which that culture can be defeated or at least undermined. Buchan demonstrates how the system operates, in other words, not only to show Hannay's development but also to illustrate later the means by which both the Germans and Hannay defy that system (by manipulating the visual matrix upon which it's built).

Despite these increasingly sophisticated instances of liminal connection, however, Hannay's progression to the level of visual manipulation practiced by the Germans is relatively measured. He does not attain the ability to mask his former identity completely and to immerse himself fully into a new persona until the end of his time on the run in Scotland. The key connection that leads to this mastery is Hannay's spontaneous communitas with the spectacled roadman Alexander Turnbull. After hearing Turnbull's "confessions" that he was too hung-over to do his roadwork because of his daughter's

wedding the previous evening and that he was now in danger of losing his job when the new Surveyor came to visit, Hannay offers to occupy his roadman's place for him while Turnbull went home to bed, a proposal to which Turnbull readily agrees. The two then exchange accessories, with Turnbull taking Hannay's coat (including Scudder's invaluable notebook), waistcoat, and collar, while Hannay takes Turnbull's spectacles and "filthy old hat" (51). While assuming his role as Turnbull's stand-in, Hannay reflects on a nearly mystical bit of veldcraft he learned during his time in the colonies: "I remember an old scout in Rhodesia, who had done many queer things in his day, once telling me that the secret of playing a part was to think yourself into it. You could never keep it up, he said, unless you could manage to convince yourself that you were *it*" (52). That is, Hannay finds it necessary to construct for himself a full, temporary identity, not just the outward trappings of a superficial disguise. To that end, Hannay rubs dirt in his eyes and on his face, bites and scrapes his fingernails, scuffs his boots, and takes various other precautions to assume the bearing and appearance of the roadman. He also turns his mind toward assuming the atmosphere surrounding the roadman's life: "So I shut off all other thoughts and switched them to the road-mending. I thought of the little white cottage as my home, I recalled the years I has spent herding on Leithen Water, I made my mind dwell lovingly on sleep in a box-bed and a bottle of cheap whisky" (52). It is this almost mystical technique, the total assimilation of identity, that enables Hannay to withstand the scrutiny he undergoes that afternoon as the Germans interview him in his guise as the roadman[31]. It is this same technique, as Hannay soon learns, that renders the

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[31] Sherlock Holmes employs a similar technique when donning his disguises. In "A Scandal in Bohemia," Watson says, "It was not merely that Holmes changed his costume.

Germans invisible in the Scottish countryside – they pose quite convincingly as Britons –

and most difficult to detect, even for Hannay, at the end of the novel. Without his

experience in this type of liminoid disappearance, this ability to hide in plain sight and

thus defy even the minutest observation, particularly as Hannay manipulates the reliance

on visual assessment that comes increasingly to define the connections in this novel, he

would not have been qualified to defeat his enemies. Thus, the episode with Turnbull is

important in this novel for more than just the vulnerability Hannay exchanges with the

roadman. It also foreshadows the strategies of the enemy and the tactics Hannay will

employ to defeat them, even as it details Hannay's skill at trying on new identities to

resolve his own identity crisis.

The liminal alliances Hannay establishes during his journey in many ways

prefigure the dynamics of the connection he forges with the Germans and serve to

transform Hannay into a man ready and able to make this connection. He's prepared to

play a deadly game with these enemies that just days before would have seemed

incomprehensible to him; he's prepared because of the liminal journey he's taken and the

spontaneous connections he's made along the way. Initially, his connection with Black

Stone[32] follows the same pattern as the other moments of spontaneous communitas in the

His expression, his manner, his very soul seemd to vary with every fresh part that he
assumed" (20). Hannay considers his own ability to effect such a transformation an
exotic skill he brought with him from the Colonies. It certainly adds to the exotic (and
threatening) nature of Holmes's character that he can so similarly transform himself.

[32] As have other scholars, I've chosen to use this term to refer to the leader of the German
spy ring, though technically this term refers to the German conspiracy as a whole, not the
spy who leads the operation or his two associates. Those three men are not named in the
novel, perhaps adding to their elusiveness.

story: a disguised Hannay quickly makes a visual assessment of his counterpart while allowing this counterpart to survey him. Hannay stumbles into the Germans' cottage in the Scottish countryside with the police hot on his heels. The enemy, as Hannay first encounters him directly, appears to be sophisticated, refined, calm, and essentially Dickensian in his respectable Britishness. He describes the enemy and his room as follows:

> There was a knee-hole desk in the middle [of the room], and seated at it, with some papers and open volumes before him, was the benevolent old gentleman. His face was round and shiny, like Mr. Pickwick's, big glasses were stuck on the end of his nose, and the top of his head was as bright and bare as a glass bottle. He never moved when I entered, but raised his placid eyebrows and waited on me to speak. (60)

The adjectives he uses here – benevolent, placid – along with the dignified and literary surroundings, lend an air of respectability to this man. Based on such a positive visual assessment, Hannay and his readers must certainly anticipate an offer of hospitality in keeping with the other alliances Hannay has made thus far. The older man says that he'd like to discuss Hannay's story "at our leisure," indicating the terms of the exchange to be made – hospitality for information, as with the literary innkeeper before. And when the older man says, "I object to my privacy being broken in upon by clumsy rural policeman" and offers to send them away, Hannay describes the man as "extraordinary" and seems to believe that he has found another liminal connection. As Hannay puts it, "Once again I had found an unexpected sanctuary" (61).

What Hannay and the readers discover together, in the climactic moment in which Black Stone "hoods his eyes like a hawk," is that the relational pattern established thus far in the novel has gone awry and that this distinguished Dickensian gentleman is actually Hannay's mortal foe, a man who unlike Hannay's other connections has also assumed a persona designed to deflect accurate visual assessment. As Hannay had manipulated his appearance while standing in for Turnbull because passersby would expect to see a roadman in that position, so it becomes evident that Black Stone has assumed the appearance of a countryside gentleman because one would expect to find such a man in such a place. Hannay is startled for a moment as he unexpectedly comes face-to-face with his enemy; he must be equally startled to realize that his enemy uses the very same technique – that of hiding in plain sight – that Hannay uses. He certainly understands the fluidity of his own identity, but in this moment he understands the frightening fluidity of his enemy's identity as well. The Germans have been hiding in Scotland and posing as Britons even as Hannay has been hiding in Scotland and posing as, among others, Alexander Turnbull. And indeed, Hannay resorts to this very same tactic – the total assumption of disguise – in this tense moment. He follows his own advice in regard to evading detection: "If you are hemmed in on all sides in a patch of land there is only once chance of escape. You must stay in the patch, and let your enemies search it and not find you" (49). To this end, he concocts a story on the spot in which he claims to be a beggar named Ned Ainslie, "a poor devil with an empty stomach" who recently stole some money out of a wrecked car. This, he claims, is the reason for the pursuit from which the bald man has just rescued him. Hannay banks on two exploitable factors here: his ratty, disheveled clothing seems in keeping with the

character he's playing, and more importantly, the bald man has never met him before (though the bald man initially identifies him correctly as Mr. Richard Hannay). Throughout their conversation, as often as the enemy calls him Hannay, the more urgently Hannay insists that he is in fact Ned Ainslie, which eventually has its desired effect: says Hannay, "It was obvious that he was badly puzzled. You see he had never seen me, and my appearance must have altered considerably from my photographs, if he had got one of them. I was pretty smart and well-dressed in London, and now I was a regular tramp" (64). For the moment, Hannay has successfully manipulated the visual and has therefore confused his enemy by his assumption of yet another identity.

It is the lack of face-to-face experience, the absence of shared liminal space until now, that disqualifies Black Stone from recognizing Hannay for certain and allows Hannay to manipulate the visual matrix governing this connection. After further conversation, and amidst the evident doubt growing in the enemy's mind, the bald man attempts to pierce through Hannay's disguise with his gaze, a moment Hannay calls "the hardest ordeal of all" and describes thusly: "There was something weird and devilish in those eyes, cold, malignant, unearthly, and most hellishly clever. They fascinated me like the bright eyes of a snake. I had a strong impulse to throw myself on his mercy and offer to join his side" (64). Hannay manages to stay in character, however, resisting the temptation to succumb to the enemy's stare, and even manages to grin as he says to the enemy: "You'll know me next time, guv'nor" (64). These tense moments in the enemy's headquarters solidify the communitas between Hannay and his enemy. They now have established direct contact in contested space; they have stood literally eye-to-eye and have communed to such a degree that Hannay feels a momentary compulsion to join the

enemy's side. They have now connected to one other so intimately that they have shared

a secret: that each operates according to a fluid conception of identity. In these moments

the enemy has come to know Hannay by more than just his name (though for the moment

Hannay's guise as Ainslie serves to buy him some time), and Hannay has come to know

the shape-shifting skill of his enemy far better than any conventional authority – those

who have not met the enemy in liminal contest space – ever could. Despite the

subterfuge on both sides, he and Black Stone have now meet as essential beings, fulfilling

Turner's description of spontaneous communitas, though in an openly combative manner.

From this point on, only Hannay can save Britain from this otherwise invisible

invader. The visual assessment and connection made by both Hannay and the Germans

insures that these combatants must meet again; no one has seen Black Stone as Hannay

has. Soon, as Turner suggests must happen, Hannay's connection with the Germans

evolves into something more structured. "Spontaneous communitas is a phase," Turner

writes, "a moment, not a permanent condition" (140). This is so because, as Turner

observes, "Communitas itself soon develops a structure, in which free relationships

between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social

personae" (132). Hannay will pursue the Germans as an agent of the government – a

structured relationship of agent versus enemy – because of his initial communitas with

them. In the meantime, however, Hannay has been tainted, perhaps permanently, by this

connection. This cultural taint serves to make Hannay a monster, according to Jeffrey

Cohen's definitions (more on this below), and more broadly to highlight the notion that,

because of the manner in which Hannay repels the German invasion, the cultural and

physical barriers relied upon to delineate good guy and bad buy, British and foreign, Us

and Them, are permeable, malleable, and perhaps even fundamentally unreliable.

Hannay's communitas with his German enemies becomes both a qualification to save the

nation and a cultural crisis of identity.

Permeating the Barriers: Monstrosity and Outsidership

Like the other works of fiction I've examined in this project, *The Thirty-Nine*

Steps stands at the nexus of several literary modes: in this case, the adventure story and

the spy novel, as I've mentioned, as well as the Gothic (both imperial and classical). It is

the latter term that has been left for the most part unexamined in reference to Buchan's

work, and yet several scholars have acknowledged (without using the label) the Gothic

undercurrent of this novel. Gavin Lambert, for example, notes the frightening

atmosphere to be found in Buchan's fiction and argues that his "best novels create a

landscape of suspense, fear behind a line of trees, in a distant figure climbing a hill or an

empty street with shuttered windows" (85). Dennis Butts similarly suggests that

Buchan's early work (a group of books in which I would include *The Thirty-Nine Steps*)

"shared to some degree in that unease verging on paranoia about the fear of foreign

invasion and of civilisation's overthrow which swept through Britain in the last decades

of the nineteenth century" (44). The *Thirty-Nine Steps* derives its texture of suspense and

uncertainty, its Gothic ambiance, from this type of fear, this paranoia, specifically as the

heroic Hannay and the villainous Germans both mask their appearances and move freely

through what looks to be the peaceful Scottish countryside or the civilized English

capital. Their liminal contest asks readers to consider the efficacy of visual systems of

assessment and to consider the possibility that even the most outwardly innocent-looking

person might manipulate the visual matrix and thus mask the sins of the past or potentially shield the uninitiated from the threat of future catastrophe.

Perhaps more importantly, however, this novel also captures a Gothic sense of ambivalence regarding the cultural boundaries it seeks to explore. Fred Botting notes that the Gothic often functions by "crossing boundaries and disrupting categories as much as it serves to preserve them" and thus "offers a heterogeneous and conflicting reflection of the present" ("In Gothic Darkly," 8). Buchan's text captures this ambivalence by positing a hero whose outsider status matches the foreignness of his enemies: both Hannay and the Germans come from elsewhere, both have mastered techniques of espionage that deflect visual assessment, and both employ techniques that resonate with the exotic. The novel therefore resists a jingoistic narrative of Britain defending its empire or fighting off foreign invaders by its superior Britishness and instead depicts a set of permeable boundaries that define that Britishness and then populates the contested boundary spaces with ambiguous, mobile, monstrous characters.

For Jeffrey Cohen, monsters are those whose "power to evade and to undermine" is facilitated by their status as "disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structure" (6) Far from being identifiable solely on the basis of visual assessment, Cohen's monsters are those who appear to be other than they are and, more menacingly, those who occupy what Cohen calls an "ontological liminality" between the categories a disciplinary society is equipped to monitor. Cohen adds further that because it "resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition" (7), the monster serves essentially as "an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond – of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as

distant and distinct but originate Within" (7). The monster is therefore a manifestation of the uncategorized threat that a disciplinary regime might not be designed to handle, and also the embodiment of the chaos that ensues when the legal powers-that-be face a threat they cannot counter. For Cohen, the monster is "pure culture," a fear-made-flesh, a body that "quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence" (4). The monster's very existence serves to challenge the barriers a society constructs to define itself, both within its own confines as well as between itself and those outside.

By Cohen's descriptions, there are two monsters patrolling the cultural borders in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. The German spies, of course, perfectly represent the nebulous cultural position Cohen would call monstrous. As I've previously shown, the Germans in the text have mastered the arts of disguise, of hiding in plain sight, of infiltration and stealth. Dennis Butts observes that "Buchan's villains are people of immense gifts, not only subtle organisers and skillful plotters, but dedicated, heroic, often charismatic personalities" (54). The skill and charisma of the Germans underscores the complexity of the threat Hannay and the British face in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Instead of a battle between superior British forces and stereotypically inferior foreigners, Buchan's novel becomes a contest between an underprepared British security system and a highly-skilled, highly-organized, even patriotic (to their own nation) invasion force.   It is also a contest, as I'll show, between a monstrous force of Germans and an equally monstrous and yet heroic defender in the person of Hannay. Buchan became increasingly aware, Butts writes, that his villains "represent dangers in the very middle of our society, and that they share many of the qualities of his heroes." The notion that "villainy and virtue are often

very close to each other," Butts continues, is a recurring theme in Buchan's work (55). It is part of Buchan's cultural project, in other words, to depict his villains and his heroes as authentically menacing not only to the other characters in his novels but indeed to the fabric of British culture itself; they serve if nothing else to challenge the conventional boundaries between the moral and immoral, the ethical and unethical, the protective and the menacing, the heroic and the villainous, and ultimately between the British and the foreign[33].

Hannay, therefore, becomes in this text the other monster, a moving force of liminality and uncertainty, an amalgam of shifting cultural identities and exotic techniques of evasion who resists simple classification and official containment. Both Hannay and the Germans embody frightening sets of contradictions. The Germans are spies, invaders, foreign villains, and yet they simulate harmless Britishness so well that even the British authorities are fooled. Hannay is a foreigner and yet a Briton; a hero who steals cars, harasses law-abiding citizens (like Marmaduke Jopley), punches police

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[33] The menace attached particularly to Buchan's Germans is nothing to dismiss as pure fantasy or genre-driven stereotype, even in a romanticized "shocker" like *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Gertrude Himmelfarb argues that Buchan's romantic streak had little to do with the conservative "sentimental attachment to tradition, rank, and pomp" a man in his cultural position might have been assumed to foster. His interest lay, says Himmelfarb, in "a Gothic, almost apocalyptic vision of the dark, destructive forces contained in human beings and society." Buchan's villains, therefore, "are permeated by this sense of the infernal." A man like Black Stone "is not a fallen gentleman but a fallen man, the personification of evil" and "satisfied with nothing less than the subversion of society" (268). For Hannay to become intimately aligned with such a villain, as he does during their initial face-to-face meeting in the Scottish cottage, is truly to risk a permanent taint on his cultural standing, a stain on his character not easily removed. Already an outsider in his home country, this cultural taint serves further to render Hannay a threat to established cultural categories.

officers, and destroys buildings; an upright gentleman who frequently masks his appearance; a national savior who operates in the wilds of Scotland and the shadows of London. Like the Germans, Hannay is able to evade capture and undermine authority; his movement through liminal spaces represents a mobile challenge the legal system (in the form of police) can't contain or prevent. He defies visual assessment by his use of disguise. He has the bearing of a gentleman and yet deploys an almost-mystical knowledge of veldcraft he picked up in the Colonies. He is, it seems, both British and Other, a monstrous and inherently threatening status that resists easy categorization. "Sometimes," as Lisa Hopkins writes, "the process of Othering is not a simple binary affair, but is triangulated in ways which cause perceptions of national characteristics and attitudes to be blurred and displaced" (69). Hannay is both British Self and foreign Other, a disturbing hybrid whose very body threatens to displace the boundaries that help define the nation he saves.

A central component of the cultural menace represented by both Hannay and the Germans has to do with their status as amateur and professional spies, respectively, and in particular the degree to which spies embody cultural anxieties about the invasion of privacy. Michael Denning convincingly positions Buchan's novel as "part of a wider 'spy fever' in Edwardian Britain," a literary work that joins "a series of moral panics which have been orchestrated around fears of espionage" (40). Denning argues that one of the marks of the transition from the Victorian adventure story to the twentieth-century thriller "is the shift from an assertive, confident, and expansionist genre to an increasingly insular, even paranoid, genre stressing vigilance and protection against invasion" (41). Clive Bloom characterizes such paranoia as "both an obsession with

violation by *outside* agencies and as violation by *internal* agencies who are seemingly

behind government and beyond its control" (2; original emphasis). Of course this

anxiety about the invasion of personal privacy and propriety inherent to espionage is not

new in Buchan's late-Victorian or Edwardian time. As I discussed in chapter 2, Phillip

Thurmond Smith reports that Londoners early in Victoria's reign maintained such a

"public sensitivity to spies" that even plain-clothes detectives, referred to in one

publication as "human moles who work without casting up the earth lest their course

should be discovered," were viewed with considerable disdain and distrust (61). It is

easy to associate this level of paranoia with the Germans in Buchan's text; they act as

well-disguised "moles" within Great Britain while plotting the military downfall of that

country. To understand the paranoia Hannay embodies, however, takes a bit more

imagination, and yet Hannay's direct liminal combat with the Germans raises the

possibility that he represents as great a cultural threat as they do, indeed that he shares an

identity with them. Writing of the cultural role of the spy, Yumna Siddiqi argues,

"Although, like the detective, he protects law and order, he does so in a more risky way.

His knowledge is intimate rather than synthetic – he actually assumes the identity of the

Other" (25). When that Other is an invasionary force of German spies, this assumption

of shared identity is particularly threatening.

   At times the text seems to call particular attention to this connection, as though to

enhance the subtle threat posed by Hannay because of the obvious threat of the Germans.

Twice during Hannay's conversation with Sir Walter Bullivant, Sir Walter refers to the

Germans in terms equating them with Hannay: he calls them "your friends" while

pondering who leaked information to them about the arrival of a French diplomat (83),

and later suggests that Hannay should now "lie low" to avoid a confrontation with "your Black Stone friends" (85). Sir Walter's choice of words echoes Scudder's voice earlier in the novel, when he warns Hannay in the Portland Place flat that "[m]y friends are not playing this game for candy" (12). Of course the use of the word "friend" in both cases carries a tone of irony, and yet the word still indicates the closeness of the relationship, the intimacy even, between first Scudder and later Hannay and these German enemies. This combat is conducted at a personal level between individuals in a fairly enclosed space; it is not yet a battle (as it will be soon) between faceless armies representing distant nations.

The intimacy of the connection between Hannay and the Germans, though, goes much deeper than Sir Walter's semantic gestures. It is couched more subtly throughout the text in the manner in which Hannay and his "friends" the Germans displace the internal and external boundaries that largely define the parameters of British life and indeed of Britishness itself. The novel's obsession with boundaries and in particular with personal privacy can be seen very early in the narrative with Hannay's description of the relative isolation of his home. Hannay describes his lodgings as follows: "My flat was the first floor in a new block behind Langham Place. There was a common staircase, with a porter and a liftman at the entrance, but there was no restaurant or anything of that sort, and each flat was quite shut off from the others" (8). Hannay's description of his flat is noteworthy for the degree to which his space seems perfect for secrecy – each flat was isolated, there are two men who monitor movement at the entrance (enough to be vigilant, not enough to make the place inviolable), and Hannay's flat is on the first floor (one up from street level) and thus not directly accessible from the street. Hannay further

explains the self-imposed privacy of his lodgings: "I hate servants on the premises, so I had a fellow to look after me who came in by day. He arrived before eight o'clock every morning and used to depart at seven, for I never dined at home" (8). The space, like so many in the labyrinthine city, seems carefully constructed as a perfect nested space in which to hide a spy.

And indeed, Hannay's involvement in this case begins at the moment when Scudder enters Hannay's private space and then secures a barrier between himself and whatever trouble he seeks to escape. Hannay's apartment is transformed in this moment into a nested space of liminal contest. Scudder seeks sanctuary, and seemingly finds comfort, in Hannay's flat, and yet as his entrance into Hannay's private space represents the invasion of a foreign conspiracy into Hannay's private life, Scudder's entrance at least in part dissolves the carefully constructed boundary between private and public, between interior space and exterior influence. When Hannay first encounters him, Scudder asks two questions as they stand together at Hannay's door: "Can I speak to you?" and "May I come in for a minute?" The first question represents an external approach, the second a threshold crossing. These questions have no pause between them; Scudder thus equates the act of speaking with Hannay and the act of infiltrating his personal space. Hannay narrates: "I got my door open and motioned him in. No sooner was he over the threshold than he made a mad dash for my back room, where I used to smoke and write my letters. Then he bolted back." Scudder then asks "Is the door locked?" and then locks it himself (9). In doing so, he fastens a barrier at the threshold of the flat between himself and the trouble outside, thus transforming Hannay's apartment into a nested liminal space of contest, a space intentionally and defensively closed against

the threat of external menace. Hannay soon learns, though, that the isolation of his private space makes it unlikely that the police will believe in his innocence regarding Scudder's murder. "The odds were a thousand to one," he says, "that I would be charged with the murder, and the circumstantial evidence was strong enough to hang me" (20). Part of that circumstantial evidence revolves around the privacy of the space and the fact that seemingly no one (except the enemy, of course) knew that Scudder was in the flat. A nested space, in other words, can be both a haven and a trap, in this case for both Scudder and Hannay. Scudder's presence in Hannay's flat, and his subsequent murder there, represent a blurring of boundaries between private residence and public battlefield.

This blurring can be seen again later in the story, when Hannay finds himself participating in the dissolution of private space, this time as the invader rather than the host. After confusing Black Stone with his disguise as the downtrodden Ned Ainslie, Hannay is ushered into the storeroom, the innermost nested space, of Black Stone's country cottage. That is, the man from without (Hannay) is brought with his public concerns and metaphorical baggage into the most private space commanded by the Germans. The place was so private as to be inhospitable to outsiders; Hannay describes the room as "a damp chamber" with an uncarpeted and uneven floor, nothing to sit on, heavily shuttered windows, and a smell of "mould and disuse" (64). This is a storeroom, a secret room, a room hidden from view from the rest of the world. Rather than sitting still and awaiting his fate – rather, in other words, than succumbing to the Germans' secret plans for him in this hidden space – Hannay instead takes it upon himself literally to explode the boundary between this private space and the outside world. He found some bricks of lentonite and, as a last chance, as he says, "for myself and my country,"

he blows the back wall out of the house (67). The smoke and debris that surround him

represent in material fashion the metaphoric displacement of the confines of private

space. The Germans' space has been violated by Hannay's bomb even as Hannay's

private space was violated by Scudder's entrance and subsequent murder.

Of course like Scudder's murder, Hannay's destruction of the cottage is

technically an illegal act, though Hannay's narration makes it clear that he commits this

illegality for preservation of self and country. Still, in this and other exploits, Hannay's

actions threaten another boundary, that which separates the supposed Good Guys from

the supposed Bad Guys, the heroes from the villains.   Hannay takes time partway

through his journey through Scotland to reflect on his own criminal activity: "As I sat on

a hillside, watching the tail-light [of Marmaduke Jopley's car] dwindle, I reflected on the

various kinds of crime I had now sampled. Contrary to general belief, I was not a

murderer, but I had become an unholy liar, a shameless imposter, and a highway-man

with a marked taste for expensive motor-cars" (56). This list of offenses, we should note,

does not yet include the destruction of the Germans' cottage, as I have described above,

nor does Hannay mention here the instance in a small Scottish village when a local

policeman made a grab for the hood of Hannay's stolen car and, says Hannay, "only

dropped off when he got my left in his eye" (40). Hannay later assaults another police

officer, this one a London constable who tries to subdue Hannay after his fight in the

street with the still-angry Marmaduke Jopley and Jopley's friends (87). For all of the

"good" he intends to do for his country, Hannay's record of automobile theft, felonious

assault of policeman, destruction of private property, and deceit through disguise position

him in cultural terms as decidedly criminal in his conduct. As a hero, Hannay looks rather villainous.

The same cannot be said, however, for the Germans, at least from the point of view of an outside observer. I have already discussed Hannay's first impression of Black Stone as a charming and rather Dickensian old man, a perfect specimen of learned British sophistication. This is the epitome of the Germans' technique in disguise; in this text the foreign enemies render themselves innocuous by posing as law-abiding Britons. While confined in the Germans' storeroom, already aware of his enemy's identity, Hannay finds their reversed cultural positions particularly galling. He "began to think wistfully of the police," he says, because they "at any rate were fellow-countrymen and honest men" as opposed to "the ghoulish aliens" who had entrapped him. He laments, though, that in his present disreputable physical appearance in comparison with Black Stone, the police would easily have believed the respectable old man and would have arrested Hannay on the spot. "Most likely," he concludes, "[Black Stone] had letters from Cabinet Ministers saying he was to be given every facility for plotting against Britain. That's the sort of owlish way we run our politics in the Old Country" (65). Aside from the obvious political statement, Hannay here again conveys his cultural isolation, his inability to participate fully in the legal system of his own country and his simultaneous unwillingness to join the side of those threatening that country. And further, he highlights the degree to which the barriers between heroes and villains have been broken down by the tactics of the Germans. Because they look more respectable than he does, and because they have hidden their crimes while he has been on the run from his, those in charge of the legal system of discipline would be quick to arrest the hero Hannay while

letting the villainous Germans go free. In a system that makes visual assessments of character and guilt, Hannay finds himself on the wrong side of the ledger.

Hannay's difficult legal and moral positions highlight what becomes in this text a far more crucial boundary or distinction. As a returned colonial, as an increasingly skillful spy and a sometime-criminal, and yet as a national hero, Hannay threatens to displace the barrier between what is British and what is foreign, or to put it another way, the Us vs. Them barrier. The text seems to ask, from a British perspective, can Hannay every truly be one of us? His tactics are exotic, derived as I have mentioned from foreign experience; as Yumna Siddiqi puts it, Hannay "functioned as a magical figure who adroitly footed national boundaries" (31). His intimate connections in this text cross the boundaries and include the very Germans he seeks to combat. He has defied for a time the legal system of the very country he hopes to preserve, presenting at the very least an uneasy compromise between heroism and villainy. He acts with the interests of the mother country at the fore, but he cannot be assumed always to do so because, again, he spent his formative years elsewhere; he is British by birth by not necessarily by culture. And perhaps worst of all, he doesn't fit in. From the opening moments of the novel, when he complains about the dullness of London and his desire to return to the colonies, Hannay seems dissatisfied with life in England unless something dramatic is happening. Without some foreign invaders to track down, can Hannay ever settle down into comfortable Britishness?

The only characters in the novel who seem able to establish some sort of comfortable Britishness, actually, are the Germans themselves, who not only look the part but also seem to inhabit it. At the end of the story they live in Trafalgar Lodge, a

seaside home sporting a Union Jack flag outside, and play golf and tennis like any good Britons on holiday. Hannay, from his point of surveillance over the dwelling of these still-disguised spies, describes the leader of this group as "exactly the kind of satisfied old bird you will find in every suburb and every holiday place. If you wanted a type of the perfectly harmless person you would probably pitch on that" (99). These men speak in gentle English accents, they've filled their home British sporting trophies and masculine British décor, and even to Hannay's skeptical and communitas-privileged gaze, they appear as innocently British as anyone could hope to be. "It was simply impossible to believe," Hannay reports, "that these three hearty fellows were anything but what they seemed – three ordinary, game-playing, suburban Englishmen, wearisome if you like, but sordidly innocent" (102). They fit in, in other words, as Hannay clearly does not. They seem in these moments much more like "Us" – the designation Hannay never quite achieves – and very little like "Them."

To complicate these matters further, it is neither British wisdom nor British authority that ultimately spurs Hannay on to confront these seemingly-British gentlemen. He is instead motivated to fulfill his duty in these tense concluding moments by two instances of *foreign* wisdom and authority. Prior to the final scene at Trafalgar Lodge, after the Black Stone has infiltrated Sir Walter's house in the guise of the First Sea Lord, it is the Frenchman General Royer who contextualizes the deception perpetrated by the Germans. He shares an anecdote from his own time in the colonies – in this instance, Senegal – about a lion who, unbeknownst to him, had snuck up behind him and killed his horse. "I never saw the kill," he concludes, "and I never marked [the mare's] absence, for my consciousness of her was only of something tawny, and the lion filled that part." He

then connects the situation in Sir Walter's house in the heart of London to his bit of

colonial wisdom: "If I could blunder thus, gentlemen, in a land where men's senses are

keen, why should we busy preoccupied urban folk not err also?" (92). His suggestion,

made in Hannay's hearing, validates the colonial wisdom Hannay has carried with him to

this point by showing the use of colonial insight even in the heart of urban England.

Further, Royer demonstrates that those with colonial experience – he and Hannay, despite

their national differences are the only ones in the room with such experience and thus

share a colonial communitas – are better able to understand the tactics of the Germans,

the foreign combatants invading this domestic sphere. Hannay says after this

conversation that the Frenchman Royer was "the man of action among fumblers" (93),

the fumblers in this case being the British authorities who, in Hannay's mind, seem to

lack the experience needed to fight this battle. When Royer later says, "I for one am

content to leave the matter in Mr. Hannay's hands" (97), Hannay accepts this statement

as his "commission" to lead the final campaign against the Germans. Hannay's final

authority, again, comes from a Frenchman, a foreigner on English soil.

Despite this commission, however, Hannay still finds himself at a loss in the final

confrontation until he remembers the other pieces of colonial wisdom that ultimately

decide his course of action. The first is from Peter Pienaar, a scout of Hannay's

acquaintance in Rhodesia, who explained the hiding-in-plain-sight theory that Hannay

mentions earlier in the text. Pienaar argued that "barring absolute certainties like

fingerprints, mere physical traits were very little use for identification" because of the

ease by which someone might manipulate his visual aspect. Pienaar understood and

shared with Hannay the practice which the Germans in the text have mastered: "If a man

could get into perfectly different surroundings from those in which he had been first observed," Hannay says, "and – this is the important part – really play up to those surroundings and behave as if he had never been out of them, he would puzzle the cleverest detectives on earth" (102-3). This tactic seems beyond the scope of the English characters in the novel; only those with colonial experience can conceptualize such a strategy. And, in the final crisis, Hannay proves able to understand the exotic power he faces because of that same colonial expertise. He briefly remembers his own hunting experience in the Pali hills of Rhodesia when a rhebok he was chasing "simply leaked out of the landscape" by "stand[ing] still and melt[ing] into the background." Hannay moves forward, then, against the Germans after applying the colonial moral to his present predicament: "The Black Stone didn't need to bolt," he concludes, because they "were quietly absorbed into the landscape" (104). The Germans disappear in England, then, by appearing to all observers as British, a feat Hannay for all of his veldcraft and shape-shifting skill can't ever seem to accomplish.

Hannay's final defeat of the Germans, then, comes only when he has fully understood and, more importantly, connected personally with their tactics of espionage and infiltration. That is, it comes only when he has become as much as possible like his enemy. He enters Trafalgar Lodge and plays cards with his enemy, still second-guessing his convictions that these disguised men truly are disguised the inside of the house is "as orthodox as an Anglican church" (105) and because the men's behaviour was "too confoundedly genuine" to be acting (107). It is the briefest of gestures, the old man tapping his fingers on his knees, that ultimately validates Hannay's mastery of the skills needed in this combat and consolidates his communitas with the Germans. "It was the

movement I remembered when I had stood before him in the moorland farm," Hannay

says, describing a gesture he only knew because he had seen it first-hand (109). Without

their direct face-to-face contact in this liminal contest, even the equally monstrous

Hannay would not have seen through the enemy's masterful subterfuge. His direct

connection, his communitas, with this enemy provides the key to this victory.

Conclusion: Towards a More Inclusive Britishness

      Hannay and the Germans employ the same mechanism in their fight against each

other – they employ the mechanism of connection, of communitas in contested space, in

order to advance their respective causes. For Hannay, those connections on the way

toward the Germans serve as a proving ground for him as he learns to manipulate the

visual spectrum that sought to define him. His connection with the Germans, facilitated

by this visual manipulation, also serves to qualify him ultimately to defeat them at their

own game, even though the cost of his close connection with them might be his ability to

assimilate into British culture. The Germans, too, employ this mechanism of connection,

principally in their attempts to connect to Hannay himself. Rather than trying to kill him,

the Black Stone seek a connection with him on the assumption that close proximity to

him would insure that his hidden knowledge would be made visible to them, and indeed

that his internal possessions would become their own. This mechanism of connection

ultimately leads to such a close association between the combatants that the boundaries

between them threaten to dissolve.

      All of which raises once again the fundamental question about Hannay: can he

ever leave behind the tainting vestiges communitas with the enemy, as well as his

colonial-Scottish outsidership, and become comfortably and fully British? The novel

seems to pose this question but not to answer it directly. Instead of shedding his colonial

background when he came to England, Hannay instead calls upon that background, and

the foreign and sometimes exotic expertise he gained there, to defeat these enemies. In a

sense it has been good for Great Britain that Hannay has not fully acclimated to the

culture; without his colonialism, the nation would have lost this battle. There's no

indication, however, even when he joins the British army at the end of the novel, that

Hannay is able to integrate fully into this new English identity and leave his spy-self

behind.

Allan Hepburn suggests that "novels of intrigue involving spies provide

speculations on the duties of citizenship" (5). Hannay, though never in this text a

professional spy, does find himself in the midst of the type of intrigue Hepburn describes;

he finds himself in the unenviable position of violating laws normally followed by

upright citizens in order to combat a greater evil. "Certain unjust acts," Hepburn writes,

"if undertaken rationally to combat other unjust acts, are not judged by universal laws but

according to the contexts in which they transpire." And Hepburn continues: "Spy novels

worry about the disequilibrium of justice for individuals over and against justice for a

polity" (5). *The Thirty-Nine Steps* certainly demonstrates this type of worry. Hannay

commits crimes – auto theft and kidnapping, for example – in pursuit of a greater justice,

namely the solution to the mystery of Scudder's murder and ultimately the defeat of the

German spies intent on stealing Britain's naval secrets. The novel worries about these

greater and lesser matters of justice and ultimately seems to come down on Hannay's

side; he is exonerated not only for the crime of murder that he did not commit, but also

for the crimes he committed as part of his greater quest. The novel judges that Hannay

acted rightly even though for a time he removed himself from the legal grid and

committed acts generally forbidden within that grid. This renders the barriers in this

narrative between good guy and bad guy, between British and German, between Us and

Them, rather blurry, begging the question: by acting rightly and thus helping to save the

kingdom, does Hannay finally qualify as fully British?

Rather than answering this question definitively, the text instead challenges the

foundation of the question by undermining the principle of national identity to begin

with. As Hepburn writes, "Spies are emblems of doubt insofar as they live at a distance

from conviction and keep testing allegiances" (5-6). The enemies of Britain with whom

Hannay must contend fight for something larger than that which can be contained within

national boundaries; theirs is an inherently transgressive fight that must be fought by

those like Scudder and later Hannay who are equally willing and able to violate sovereign

and cultural barriers. Early in the story, Scudder explains to Hannay that the men behind

the hidden anarchist movements in Europe – those who in this text are represented by the

Black Stone – are those for whom national boundaries, national economies, and indeed

national identities are essentially ethereal. "[T]hey struck a bigger thing than money,"

Scudder says, "a thing that couldn't be bought, the old elemental fighting instincts of

man. If you're going to be killed you invent some kind of flag and country to fight for,

and if you survive you get to love the thing" (11). The crossing of borders, frontiers,

boundaries becomes a matter of little importance if one views the world in a meta-

national fashion. So, who can be British, the text asks? Irrelevant, it seems to answer.

Britishness as an ideal is, in the minds of the enemies to which Hannay has aligned

himself, meaningless. The text at least raises the threatening notion that Britishness itself

is a constructed cultural status, a status one might assume or fabricate, a label that might

hold no essential moral and philosophical permanence.

The suggestion of the potential emptiness of British/Other definitions becomes

even more dynamic when applied early in the text to the seemingly anti-Semitic

references for which Buchan is so commonly criticized[34]. Scudder's initial explanation

of "the hidden movements" behind the conspiracies in Europe lays the blame on "Jew-

anarchists" who finance such movements (11). As Hannay learns more about his

enemies, however, he discovers that Scudder "had told me a pack of lies" and that "his

yarns about the Balkans and the Jew-Anarchists and the Foreign Office Conference were

eyewash" (37). This metaphor is particularly apt; Scudder's move to blame the Jews

temporarily obscured Hannay's vision of the case, and yet it proved to be cleansing.

Once the eyewash was gone, Hannay saw that Scudder had played on conventional

British impressions, racially motivated, in order to mask the much larger and more

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[34] I find in Yumna Siddiqi's contention – that Buchan was "an unquestioning champion of British imperialism" (106) who held the racist views attached to such a designation – a fair representation of much that has been written about Buchan's racism. Even Buchan's apologists explain away rather than challenge his status as a racist writer. Both Robin Winks and Gertrude Himmelfarb argue that historical context should be considered in order to help mitigate Buchan's uncomfortable views, while Miles Donald, in what seems to be a compliment and a simultaneous indictment, suggests that Buchan constructs a "rhetoric of escape" (59) that manipulates the reader into following Buchan down any road his chooses to go and to accept in the heat of the moment what otherwise might seem unacceptable. These arguments miss the important point, however, that in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, at least, Buchan seems to play with the existing racial prejudice of the British by presenting a damning story about Jews that Hannay readily believes and then later revealing that the story was bunk.

insidious game that was being played. Hannay found it perfectly natural that "Jew-anarchists" would be behind some insidious plot; the tale "rang desperately true" (37) to Hannay because Hannay is "British" enough to have readily believed such demonization. When it turns out that indeed Jews had nothing to do with the conspiracy Hannay combats, it is left for readers to examine that cultural prejudice that made the tale so believable. Far from furthering racist stereotypes, Buchan seems to move some way toward questioning, if not the stereotypes themselves, at least the unreflective acceptance of them on the part of the British. Once again, the text seems to ask for at least the consideration of a more inclusive sense of Britishness as well as an examination of the varied cultural assumptions of the superiority and insider/outsider distinctions that undergird late-Victorian British self-definition.

Of course by sacrificing his own cultural standing in order to combat his German enemies, Hannay challenges a complete dismissal of British self-definition, suggesting that British national security and therefore some sort of Britishness is worth fighting for. But by championing this fight, Hannay posits, in Yumna Siddiqi's words, "an inclusive and malleable notion of Britishness" (119), one that includes Hannay himself, despite his foreign experience and menacing liminal allegiances. These factors undermine any sense of "pure" Britishness; Hannay's cultural taints break the conventional barrier between the British "Us" and the foreign "Them." And with this barrier broken, one must push further and ask who else might now be included in the increasingly diverse "Us". It is important to note, too, that during this novel Hannay has inhabited a wide variety of social positions, from wanted murderer to leader of a governmental raid, from political speaker to roadman, from wandering beggar to traditional Scotsman, from colonial

mining engineer to spy to soldier, all in the name of defending Britain. In a conventionally structured society, these roles and positions are not interchangeable; the ability to slide between them is in itself a menacing talent. Hannay's exploits show the permeability of the barriers between these various strata of British society, and yet they also show the connectedness, the Britishness, of these positions.

Part of the cultural work done by this text, then, seems to be to posit a more inclusive definition of Britishness while at the same time asking whether or not Britishness is a useful category at all. If the "Us" of Britishness might include a foreign-raised criminal closely connected with German spies, and if the "Them" of Britishness might include men who by all accounts appear to be innocent and productive Britons, then how useful, really, is the label? At least by methods of visual assessment, the parameters of the category threaten to crumble. A person with mobility and the tools to deflect visual assessment might inhabit any of the contested cultural spaces in this text, might in fact for a time become anyone, even as Hannay has done, even as the Germans have done. In this modern conception of an increasingly malleable culture, a different mode of categorization is needed to distinguish ally from enemy, a mode that this text refrains from spelling out. Instead, at the end of the text Hannay joins the British army, a rather aggressive from of aggregation designed to render Hannay as British as possible, to fully integrate him back into the British society he left as a child and left again as a liminoid mover while battling Black Stone. And yet even this aggregation is complicated; in later books, notably *Greenmantle* and *Mr. Standfast*, Hannay is repeatedly called back to England to perform varying types of liminal service for Walter Bullivant, secret missions in Hannay must exercise again his talents for crafting personae

and manipulating visual assessment. On the brink of the Great War and the impending

dissolution of Victorian ways of cultural categorization, the novel perhaps wisely abstains

from positing definitive cultural boundaries, opting instead simply to illustrate a set of

circumstances in which the returned colonial with liminal experience never quite fits in

and yet represents Britain just the same.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

I discovered on a recent research trip to London what I suspected already to be true: that London is conducive now to anonymous or invisible movement even as it was in the late-Victorian period. When Doyle, Hornung, Buchan and others (Stevenson, Wilde, Stoker) populated the city with mobile, menacing characters, their texts exposed the fundamentally permeable nature of the urban fabric and explored the means by which one might threaten the city by exploiting that permeability. On my trip I found it easy, by wearing non-descript clothes, traveling on my anonymous Oyster card, and paying cash, to move through the city without calling attention to myself. After my initial entry through immigration, I was never asked for identification; there was never a time when my identity was associated with my person or my purpose for travel. Though it may not be as simple now as it was in the Victorian period, given our increasingly technological means of surveillance, it is still possible at some level to exploit the city's size, speed, and modernization to deflect attention, to lose oneself in the crowd. It was and is a city that fosters invisibility.

This project has grown out of ideas first germinated on that trip to London, ideas about disguise, unchecked mobility, and potential menace within the city. I sought texts that depicted those romanticized facets of late-Victorian urban experience and combined them into a palpable sense of the Gothic anxiety that infuses the stories and the city in

which they are set. I looked also for works that were popular at the time, planning to

argue for a dialogic relationship between the texts that conceptualized the Gothic city and

the readers who inhabited that same city[35]. The governing idea behind my work here has

been to study the dissolution of boundaries and the menace attached to those who move

in these texts by Doyle, Hornung, and Buchan, and further to explore the manner in

which these three authors characterized London as it forms the foundation of their stories.

An inherent sense of Gothic ambiguity and foreboding, I have argued, arises within and

around the site of ungovernable movement and the displacing of cultural boundaries. As

John Paul Riquelme writes:

> The crossing of boundaries into darkness […] throughout the long
>
> twentieth century is frequent and emphatic. The refusal of conventional
>
> limits and the critical questioning of cultural attitudes often proceed within
>
> a Gothic structuring of elements or with a Gothic inflection. The
>
> transformations, adaptations, and other prominent traces of the Gothic in
>
> modern writing indicate the persistence of a cluster of cultural anxieties to

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[35] The contemporary and enduring popularity of the Holmes stories in particular adds
weight to this assertion of the dialogical potential between readers, these texts, and the
city. As I argued in the opening paragraph of chapter 2, for many readers the images
associated with late-Victorian London – the fog, the hansom cabs, and so on – come
straight from Doyle's work. It is not too much to suggest that readers might similarly
have absorbed the menacing Gothic atmosphere of the city. Of course in making this
suggestion I have posited I an ideal reader, one who would reflect on the potential
menace captured in these texts, in order to demonstrate the cultural dynamics at play
within these stories. I freely acknowledge that many contemporary readers of these texts
may have read them for entertainment without considering the cultural implications of the
stories they consumed.

which Gothic writing and literary modernism, along with postcolonial

writing and some popular forms of expression, continue to respond. (7)

Within the texts I've studied here, the site most associated with the crossing of

boundaries, the transformations of identity, and Gothic anxiety is the urban center of

London itself.

In order to add to the scholarly discussion of depictions of the Gothic in the late-

Victorian metropolis, therefore, I have explored a specific method by which the

construction of the Gothic might be theorized and then analyzed the threatening

characters that arise from that method. I have posited Turner's notions of liminality and

communitas as a way to understand the means by which certain characters defy the

surveillance inherent to their disciplinary societies. I have employed the term "liminal"

here not only to describe the transformative across-the-threshold experience that Turner

describes, but more precisely to refer to the constructed social space in which such

experiences take place. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Turner's description of the liminal

process posits a specially-designated physical space in which that process might take

place. For the tribal cultures in which Turner observed the liminal process, the liminal

space was separated from the larger tribe and thus, in effect, invisible to those still

contained within the cultural confines of the non-liminal community. "The neophytes,"

Turner writes, referring to those undergoing a liminal transformation, "are sometimes

said to 'be in another place.' They have physical but not social 'reality,' hence they have

to be hidden, since it is a paradox, a scandal, to see what ought not to be there!" (*The

Forest of Symbols* 98).   The tribal cultures Turner studied made sure to remove initiates

from sight because it would have been too troubling to see a person but not to know what

he or she was up to at any given moment. The interiority of the liminal process was fundamentally ungovernable by exterior systems of control and thus needed to be displaced.

From the starting point of this conflict between interior process and external discipline, I have taken Turner's description of the liminal space and the threatening ambiguity assigned to those within it and have transferred his terms and anxieties to those spaces within late-Victorian London that have served liminal purposes. Characters like Sherlock Holmes, A.J. Raffles, and Richard Hannay, I have argued, become threatening (or, as Jeffrey Cohen would have it, monstrous) by deliberately manipulating the visual matrix governing their otherwise structured lives and constructing for themselves alternate identities and temporary liminal spaces through which they might move in relative obscurity in order to achieve certain off-the-grid ends. These characters embody thresholds – they move through London and the British countryside as physical manifestations of split space, of the crossover position between that which is governed by the gaze of the disciplinary legal state and that which, fundamentally, cannot be so governed. What renders these texts and these characters most threatening is that the off-the-grid spaces through which they move are located within the city or countryside they occupy and, more menacingly, within sight of the uninitiated who also occupy those physical places. The spaces are not located elsewhere, as in Turner's tribal cultures, but rather co-exist within the non-liminal spaces of late-Victorian Britain. The characters who use these spaces hide in plain sight because of their altered identities, and they engage in private battles as they move through public spaces; the characters are visible, as for example when Holmes follows a disguised Stapleton down the crowded Oxford

and Regent streets, but their battle remains hidden to innocent passersby, a combination fundamentally threatening to sight-based systems of surveillance. In such moments, the liminality of the villain and the hero pursuing him becomes metaphorical; there is no literal threshold, no protective distance, that separates the villain from the innocent passersby around him. This conceptual liminality becomes in these texts an ideology of the city: London might harbor in its very midst, among the teeming masses and along the labyrinthine streets, a menacing villain who exploits the city for his own criminal purposes or, more frighteningly, a category-defying hybrid who threatens to collapse the distinctions between what is English and what is not.

The cultural impact of these threatening characters can only be enhanced by the manner in which these authors depict real physical spaces in their text. Graham Greene writes that "John Buchan was the first to realize the enormous dramatic value of adventure in familiar surroundings happening to unadventurous men" (104). This may be a bit of hyperbole on Greene's part; William Godwin, as one example, certainly placed an unadventurous man, Caleb Williams, in an adventure that took him into the familiar surroundings of London, and he did so more than a hundred years before Buchan. Greene's notion, though, still provides an important insight into the potential impact of Buchan's text as well as the works by Doyle and Hornung. Hannay's adventure through the Scottish borderlands and the English metropolis is not some Haggard-esque romantic escape into the untraceable wilds of some distant continent. The dangers Hannay encounters and the consequences that hinge upon his success are localized, immediate, decidedly recognizable in place and time. The dramatic value of these adventures in familiar surroundings has much to do with asking the reader to recognize the contested

places in which these adventures take place and from that moment to consider these once-comfortable places as the scenes for potential conflict and menace. Writers like Haggard and Kipling presented foreign vistas into which a reader could escape. Buchan, Doyle and Hornung presented local vistas from which for local contemporary readers escape was impossible because those readers lived their daily lives in those very places.

Liminality as a status ascribed to people is both temporary and abstract; however, the notion of liminality as ascribed to a place – meaning that the particular space has been for a time the locus of unseen contest – may be considered permanently transformative. The people who occupy liminal spaces may be tainted by their off-the-grid activities, as I've shown in the cases of Holmes, Raffles, and Hannay, but according to Turner's definition and as depicted in these texts, such characters eventually leave behind their off-the-grid invisibility and re-enter their disciplinary societies. The spaces in which such invisibility takes place, however, must necessarily be permanently marked as spaces at least partially outside (not between) the scope of observation; once a space has been the site of liminal contest, it must always be seen as the potential site for another (or for ongoing) liminal activity. What perceptive reader, after finishing Doyle's novel, could stroll through Dartmoor without unconsciously, perhaps, listening for the baying of the Hound? Who, after reading Buchan, can stroll through the Scottish highlands without wondering if this isolated cottage might harbor foreign spies or that copse of trees might be a shield for a secret mode of surveillance? Who, after reading Hornung, can stroll down Piccadilly in the midst of a London fog, or walk past the darkened windows of a jewellery shop closed for the night, without wondering about the presence of an unseen criminal? There is the potential for a dialogic relationship at work here, as I have

suggested above, between the fiction that depicts these theoretical realms and the real, identifiable places inhabited by these liminal characters. Once a place has shown itself to be suitable for liminal contest, one must consider the possibility (because of the suitability of the place) that another such contest might happen again in that place at any time, or indeed might be happening even right now.

London, as it is shown in these texts to be fertile ground for liminal conflict, therefore becomes the locus for the dissolution of barriers and, more pointedly, the site where certain dichotomies present in the Victorian cultural conscience become displaced. In Holmes's battle with Stapleton in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, we see the permeability of the boundaries between city and country, between modern London and primitive Dartmoor, between civilization and barbarity. In the person of A.J. Raffles we see a blurring of good guy vs. bad guy dichotomy as well as a challenge to the Victorian tendency to assume that appearance reveals character[36]. In Hannay's combat with German spies we see a challenge to traditional definitions of Britishness, particularly in the never-resolved outsidership of the hero Hannay and the success of the Germans in posing as Englishmen. By showing again and again the potential for movement and menace within London, and by demonstrating the vulnerability of outsiders to infiltrate

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[36] My intention here is not to advance the generalization that everyone in Victorian London equated appearance with character. I prefer to suggest that my authors here, in keeping with what became a Victorian literary convention, saw the need to construct characters that challenged the notion that outward appearance revealed inner quality. The ubiquitous presence of such characters in Victorian fiction can and should be construed as a tendency within these texts to combat a pervasive popular belief in the equation of physical appearance and moral standing.

and move through the city, these texts rather systematically undermine so much of what it means to be securely modern, moral, and British at the turn of the 20th century.

It is important to note here, though, that the threats to these dichotomies, and in effect the threats the cultural status quo, are in fact neutralized in these texts: Stapleton loses his life in the Mire, Hannay succeeds in unmasking the Germans, and even Raffles eventually loses the capacity to lead the dual life so threatening to Victorian conceptions of moral behaviour. One might initially conclude that these texts all celebrate the efficacy of Britain's systems of surveillance and indeed underscore the solidity of Britain's legal and defensive structures. What these texts actually show, however, is that these threats are only just barely neutralized and that the liminal spaces remain present in which new threats might materialize. These texts aren't threatening at all if the good guys win and that's the end of it. What happens instead is that these stories remystify London (and by extension the whole of Great Britain) by showing how the threats were diffused *this time*, but might not be diffused next time. As Yumna Siddiqi observes, "In their struggles against threats to civilization, Buchan's heroes come out on top, but only just, and only for the moment" (121). The same might be said for Sherlock Holmes, who defeats Stapleton in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* only to return to London and await his next adversary. And the same might be said, too, for the legal forces who briefly bring a halt to Raffles's criminal career at the end of *The Amateur Cracksman*; in Hornung's next book, Raffles returns, this time disguised as an elderly invalid from Australia, to resume his criminal career. In other words, the authors under study here seem not to be interested in a jingoistic depiction of the city's invulnerability. Rather, they point out the potential of the city to be unknowable: for every villain caught by Holmes, there might be another;

for every respectable man by day who works as a thief at night, there might be another; for every dyed-in-the-wool respectable Englishman who works in reality as a spy for a foreign power, there might be another. Out of this state of continuous criminal threat arises a perpetual state of urban tension and indeed of remystification. London is shown to need ever-tightening means of surveillance even as it is shown to be a haven for those adept at avoiding surveillance. The status-quo of the city teeters on a knife's edge as each new liminal threat presents itself. The delicate work undertaken by liminoid heroes to protect the city from invaders is never seen to be finished. Rather, the nature of the city itself serves to attract and harbor those against whom these defenders of the city must endlessly labor.

The texts I've studied here, all written between 1897 and 1914, were published at a crucial point in the city's history, at the height of its colonial prowess and its explosive Victorian expansion. By all accounts the city was larger, busier, richer, and more powerful than any city in the world. And those who inhabited London were generally aware both of its power and its prestige. The Gothic literature of the city served to mediate to some degree the unbounded optimism that might have been expected after a century of such growth. Turner writes in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* that "the portrayal of monsters and of unnatural situations in terms of cultural definitions […] may have a pedagogical function in forcing those who have taken their culture for granted to rethink what they have hitherto taken to be its axioms and 'givens'" (256). Far from highlighting or promoting any sort of optimistic view of English superiority, these texts instead show the potential decay inherent to the ever-expanding corpus of the imperial nation. This massive and vibrant body, these authors seem to suggest, might contain

miniscule, and therefore hard-to-detect, cancers that regardless of their size might threaten the health of the whole organism.

From the study of the three texts around which I've built this project, we can therefore derive four succinct conclusions about the city as it serves as a primary setting for these stories. First, late-Victorian London is full of nested spaces, unreachable and unobservable, with the inherent potential to hide secrets, cover conspiracies, and provide the means for escape for those liminoid movers savvy enough to exploit the texture of the fabric of the city itself. It is significant that none of the central characters in these stories is ever captured in London. Stapleton evades Holmes only to fall later in Dartmoor. Raffles evades the police in London only to be cornered later aboard a cruise ship. Hannay escapes from his pursuers in London twice: once disguised as a milkman, and once by ducking into Sir Walter Bullivant's house with an angry mob close at his heels. In each case the city provided the means of shelter, in the form of available disguise or hidden spaces within a congested city, for those running from pursuit.

Second, London is populated by seemingly respectable people who might not be what they appear to be. The social culture of London as illustrated in these texts values the external trappings of respectability, trappings which may be fabricated and which may therefore superficially deceive those in a position to observe and police. Raffles provides the obvious example here, as his gentlemanly appearance deflects suspicion about his criminal activity. Holmes, too, carries with him an air of respectability, and yet as I've shown, he has mastered the art of assuming disguises and thus manipulating the manner in which someone might judge him outwardly. And Hannay, despite his colonial wealth (and refinement) and his membership in upper-crust London clubs, surrenders all

that might make him recognizably British and assumes identities from all parts of the social spectrum in order to fight enemies who look more British than he does. Clearly these stories serve to undermine the many social distinctions that give shape to the late-Victorian social structure by which the inhabitants of London (and the larger nation) were defined, and indeed call into question (especially in Buchan's work) what it means to be British at all.

Third, London, at the forefront of modern transportation, is open to all manner of outside conspiracies. The city, also presumably at the forefront of modern mechanized intelligence (as embodied, for example, by Sir Walter Bullivant and his Foreign Office spy network in Buchan's novel), might be infiltrated by those who understand what that intelligence is built to combat and therefore might need to rely on a private liminoid citizen, a man who has encountered the enemy on the enemy's terms, to defend it. Modern transportation plays a crucial role in both Doyle's novel and Hornung's stories. Holmes and Watson travel so easily between London and Dartmoor that they in effect shrink the size of the country; they frequently speak as though the trip to Dartmoor is a short trip, when in fact the two settings of this novel are located several hours (by train) apart. Likewise, Raffles and Bunny travel easily from the city to the countryside in order to commit their burglaries. But it is in Buchan's work that we see most clearly the cutting-edge technology behind Great Britain's transportation systems. Hannay travels to Scotland by train and while there finds anonymous movement possible by bicycle and automobile, even as his enemies use cars and even airplanes to track their quarry. More importantly, however, the Germans in this text use surveillance by air to scope out the British naval installments off the coast of Scotland, a state-of-the-art mechanism of war

for this time. For all of its technological advancements in movement and transportation, then, London is shown to be perhaps more vulnerable than ever to those skilled enough to use those modes of transportation for off-the-grid movement. The city's reach is greater than ever before because of its network of movement; the city is in greater danger than ever before because of those who exploit that network for their own purposes.

And finally, London is by its modern, populous, and superficially evaluative nature, unknowable and unobservable in its totality. It is fundamentally a Gothic city, a place filled with hidden spaces in which might be hidden the nefarious schemes of the present and the secret sins of the past. The city might therefore be seen as a natural site of pilgrimage for those seeking asylum from trouble, for those seeking anonymity to further evil schemes, for those seeking targets upon which to practice those schemes. Following Eve Sedgwick's conception of the Gothic in terms of "inner warfare, inner spaces, inner dimensions" of the human heart and mind, we can assert that a Gothic view of London, the locus of the heart and mind of the empire, is to some degree a Gothic view of the English/British Self. There is depth in the city because of the nested spaces; there is energy and mystery there because of the ambiguity of the people, the lifeblood, flowing through the city's many arteries and veins; there is internal and external conflict there because the broken boundaries and dangerous connections, the undermining of the immune systems and the contamination by pollutants, that accompany the embrace of modernity's technological mobility. As Peter Ackroyd illustrates, London has long been described in bodily terms; these texts further the notion that the body, by its very nature as a complex of inner spaces and unobservable moving parts, is a danger to itself because of its own animating and terrifying vitality. These works pose questions about the city,

about its knowability even under modern forms of surveillance, without ever assuaging the anxieties attached to those questions. There remains after these texts a fog of uncertainty that drifts, we might say, into the modernist period that follows, an epistemological anxiety that permeates much of the cultural work of the long twentieth century. The stories I've studied here, when taken together, serve both as a call for increased surveillance as well as a collective cultural expression of skepticism that such surveillance will prove effective in such a monstrous city.

In addition to revealing and characterizing these late-Victorian cultural anxieties, the critical approach I've taken should provide further literary applications as well, especially as we study the various diffusions of the Gothic in twentieth-century and twenty-first-century productions (including most notably the detective genre and the superhero genre). This critical apparatus contributes a conceptual framework through which we can better understand, to name a few: the nested space that is the detective's office in, for example, Raymond Chandler's fiction; the transformative potential of Superman's phone booth; the hero/villain category crisis embodied by the Dark Knight; the frequent pairing of a law-abiding detective like Robert Parker's Spenser and his blatantly law-breaking partner Hawk, a partnership that allows the detective to function on both sides of the good-guy/bad-guy barrier; and the importance of the private threshold guarded by Archie Goodwin and the see-through front door of Nero Wolf's Manhattan brownstone. The connection between detective fiction, the management of thresholds, and the infiltration (by heroes and villains alike) of liminal space would seem to be a particularly fruitful avenue to explore. These and many other instances of menacing ambiguity, categorical crisis, contested conceptual space, and barrier-crossing

represent the infusion of the Gothic mode in recent works of fiction and film; an application of liminality and monster theories might yield productive cultural insights regarding these artifacts of modern popular culture.

My primary interest within this project, though, lies in an examination of the works of Doyle, Hornung, and Buchan as they populated their stories with boundary-breaking characters and nested liminal spaces. My ultimate contribution to the critical discussion of these works is to posit the late-Victorian capital city as the ideal destination for those who seek cultural absolution and rebirth, for those whose criminal misdeeds and spurious pasts incline them toward anonymity and new identities. London emerges in the texts I've studied here as the capital of a rural and urban United Kingdom in which foreign schemes of aggression can be hatched and hidden, as can domestic schemes of defense. The city becomes a place in an increasingly intermixed and volatile world that might serve as the ideal receptacle of anonymous foreign aggressors, and perhaps even the base from which they run their operations. London as it is depicted here forms part of a macro-communitas connected by rail and road and air to the conspiracies and villains that inhabit the island of Great Britain and the world beyond. Though the metropolis, and by extension the country, rests behind a highly sophisticated official system of defense, in the conception of these authors that institutional system of defense might still rely, occasionally, on the unlikely and seemingly subversive communitas between the secretly heroic individuals who patrol the borders of culture and those who, unobserved, threaten that same border. Perhaps in actuality, and certainly in these works of Victorian and Edwardian popular literature, the cultural texture of London renders the city a perfect

destination for a sort of secular pilgrimage. The metropolis welcomes those who seek to

lose themselves in the labyrinth of the city and to emerge in new (dis)guises.

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